The Church History Series

VI.

THE ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCH

W. L. ALEXANDER D.D., F.S.A.S.

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BEING

AN INQUIRY INTO THE HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN PREVIOUS TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE HEPTARCHY

BY

WILLIAM LINDSAY ALEXANDER

D.D., F.S.A.S.

NEW AND REVISED EDITION

"Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations."
—*Deut.* xxxii. 7.

London

THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY

56, Paternoster Row; 65, St. Paul's Churchyard and 164, Piccadilly

1889

Butler & Tanner,
The Selwood Printing Works,
Frome, and London.

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NOTE.

The following work, by the late Dr. Lindsay Alexander, has long been regarded as an admirably succinct and accurate narrative of a period in the history of the Church of Christ, which can never lose its interest for the inhabitants of the British Islands. It is reprinted without change from the earlier editions; a few additional notes having been given, with references to later authorities, and to some editions of standard works, more accessible than those cited by Dr. Alexander. Side-notes and an Index have also been added to the volume.

S. G. G.

1889.

THE

ANCIENT BRITISH CHURCH.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

Tu nostra, Tu, Jesu salus,
Tu robur et solatium:
Arens ut herba Te sine
Mortale tabescit genus.
HYMN. VET. ECCLES.

Jesus, Thou art our salvation,
Thou our strength and consolation:
Without Thee man's race is found
Like parched grass on arid ground.

THERE is no candid and rightly informed person who will refuse to admit that our country stands mainly indebted for her present position, and for the most attractive features of that remarkable career through which she has passed, to the influence of Christianity. The connexion between the cause and the effect is throughout so manifest here, that it is impossible to gainsay or overlook it. Until Christianity visited our shores, Britain had no place among the nations; and her primitive inhabitants,

Christianity and the welfare of Britain.

with all their rude valour, their comparatively pure and simple traditionary faith, and the vestiges still lingering among them of former knowledge of the arts, were fit only to be classed with barbarians. From that time downwards it has been in proportion as Christianity has flourished in a form approximating to her primitive purity, that the welfare of Britain has advanced or declined; and we owe it to the grace of God that, in consequence of the greater purity and liberty in which Christianity has, in these later centuries, existed amongst us, the progress of our people in all that constitutes the real greatness and happiness of a community has been so steady, if not always uniform.

The excellence of Christianity.

Let men think of Christianity as they please, it is impossible for any one who knows anything of history to doubt that this religion is capable of exerting the most powerful influence upon both individuals and nations. Its crowning excellence and glory is, that it is 'the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.' It unfolds to us the true character of God; it sets before us His claims upon us as His creatures; it shows us the relation in which we stand to Him, as sinners who have insulted His majesty and violated His law; it reveals to us His purposes of mercy, and the plan by which these are brought to pass, in accordance with the claims of His righteousness, through the propitiatory sufferings of His Son Jesus Christ on our behalf; and it announces to us the way in which, by accepting the grace freely offered to us through Christ, we, without any merit or righteousness of our own,

may become righteous in the sight of God—may be restored to His favour and love—and may ultimately be fitted to dwell in His presence for ever.

To those who cordially receive this Divine message, its *power* becomes at once apparent. They feel that a mighty energy has operated upon them, which has changed the whole aspect of their being and every habit of their mind. Old things with them have passed away, and all things have become new. They look on Nature, the world, themselves, their fellows, with different eyes from those they used before. The rule by which they regulate their judgments of things—the standard by which their estimate of the comparative worth of objects is determined, is different from what it was before. Their feelings in relation to the world and its varied pursuits are greatly modified, in some instances completely changed. They at once think less of it than they did before, and think more of it than they did before :—*less* of it as an object of pursuit or a source of good—*more* of it as a scene of delegated service and solemn responsibility ; less of it in and for itself —more of it in relation to God and eternity. The power of Christianity.

With all their natural faculties and susceptibilities unaltered, they have yet so come under 'the powers of the world to come,' that they are taught to pass their time here rather as sojourners than as natives ; *in* the world, yet not *of* the world ; cheerfully sustaining the relations and faithfully discharging the duties of life, yet ever feeling that their true citizenship is from above, and that it is only in heaven that they can find their portion and their home.

Deeply impressed with a sense of the immeasurable favours they have received at the hand of God, and having ever in view the reckoning which He, as the great Master of all, will take of their conduct as the stewards of His bounty, they seek to regulate their lives by a regard to His expressed will on the one hand, and a reference to the consequences of His approval or disapproval on the other. They thus live under the supreme influence of the invisible world. They 'walk by faith, not by sight'—by that faith whose office it is to evidence the unseen and to give substance to that which is as yet only the object of hope (Heb. xi. 1). They are taught to 'endure as seeing Him who is invisible'—to live ever 'as in the great Taskmaster's eye'—to abide in a state of continual expectancy the coming of the Judge—to have a perpetual 'respect unto the recompence of the reward'—and to be ever anxious to be found at their post, 'faithful unto death,' and ready to enter with alacrity into the presence of their Lord.

The influence of Christianity.

It is not possible that a change so peculiar, so deep, so extensive, can take place on many individuals in a community, without exerting an influence upon the general aspect and the higher interests of that community. A heathen village, some of the inhabitants of which (though it were only one or two) have been converted to Christianity, can never be exactly what it was before. This new element that has entered it will, to a greater or less extent, modify its former character, not only in the sight of God, but also in the sight of men.

Christianity is as a city set on a hill; it cannot be hid. It is as a light in a dark night; it cannot but make itself visible. It will be found to exert an influence even upon those who do not embrace it—to act upon those who flee from it or stand aloof from it—to affect even those who keenly oppose it. It is impossible it should be otherwise. Men cannot approach a fire without being warmed. Men cannot look upon light without having a perception of it, and being illuminated by it. Men cannot come into contact with truth, and yet not be affected by it.

Christianity must be seen and felt.

There is a response in the natural reason and conscience of man to all truth of a moral and religious kind, which renders it almost impossible for any one, when once it has been fairly placed before him, wholly to put it away from him. He may hate it—he may speak evil of it—he may try to refute it—he may persecute those who adopt it—he may play the very madman in his excited fury against it: still, there it abides, and he can neither get rid of it nor forget it. Nay, the very intensity of his opposition to it only serves more forcibly to rivet it in his mind, and force it on the minds of others. The more he thinks about it, the more it entwines its chains around him; the more vehemently he resists it, the more closely does its plastic hand press upon his spirit and mould his inner being. It may be that he shall never avowedly submit to its control; it may be that to all its rich and precious benefits he may remain a stranger. But his connexion with it has not been fruitless. If he could by some process empty his mind of all the new

thoughts and feelings he has acquired since first he cast his regards upon it, he would probably stand aghast to find how many they were, and what a changed man he had become since this new doctrine had come in his way. Imperceptibly, unconsciously to himself, he has been drifting away from his old moorings; and though the general aspect of the surrounding scenery may appear to a cursory survey the same, a closer scrutiny will show that he has left his former position, that he has yielded to the advancing current, and that he can never again occupy exactly the same place, intellectually and morally, as he did before.

Christianity as an energy.

The entire history of Christianity goes to illustrate and confirm these remarks. Distinguished from all other religions by the truth of its doctrines, the sublime importance of the facts on which it rests, and the purity of the morality it inculcates—Christianity has not less been distinguished by this, that wherever it has come, an ever-widening circle of influence has marked its presence in the community by any portion of which it has been embraced.

Christianity is not a system of abstract speculation, which may exist in the minds of those who adopt it without exerting any peculiar influence upon them, and without having the least effect on those around them. Nor is it a system of mystic, meditative sentimentalism, which sends its votaries, in shrinking and morbid sensitiveness, away from the din and the daylight of ordinary life into quiet places, where they may indulge, uninterrupted by the presence, the necessities, or the woes of others,

their half-waking reverie or fantastic dream. Nor does it unfold a merely graceful and poetical scheme of spiritual relations, on which the man of taste or of art may exercise his mind with intense delight, but which has nothing transitive in it—nothing that links man with man, and leads those who rejoice in it most to *do* something that others may love it too.

Christianity is essentially a practical and operative system. The impulse to work is inseparable from its existence. As it came from Him of whom it is said, that He 'worketh hitherto,' and as He who is the substance and glory of its system is One who, whilst on earth, was a weariless Worker—yea, found it His very meat and drink to work the work of God; it, too, finds its proper development and proper tendency in work. All the similitudes employed by its Founder to describe the tendency of His religion indicate this. The fire that burns—the light that shines—the seed that grows—the leaven that operates on the surrounding mass in which it is hid, and, as it were, lost, until the whole is leavened—the salt that diffuses its antiseptic power until the whole body to which it is applied is secured from decay—and others of a similar kind—all are emblems of work, influence, power. All its true votaries feel this, as by a native instinct of that regenerated being which it inspires.

The boast of the Church in the days immediately following the apostolic age was, 'We do not *say* great things—we *live* them';[1] and the events of subsequent ages fully vindicate

The work of Christianity.

[1] 'Non eloquimur magna sed vivimus.'—Minucius Felix, *Octav.*, p. 43 (ed. Ouzel, Lug. Bat. 1652).

the noble boast. Throughout the Roman empire, from the eternal city herself down to the meanest hamlet in the remotest of those provinces over which her dominion was exercised, Christianity proved herself the great ameliorator and benefactor of society. The ignorance, barbarities, cruelties, and measureless impurities of heathenism, were gradually mitigated by her benignant influence long before the empire became nominally Christian. She was everywhere the friend of letters and liberal thought. She everywhere fostered the domestic and social virtues. She everywhere was prompt to heal the sufferings and assuage the sorrows of men of all classes and countries. Human sacrifices, infanticide, polygamy, slavery, gladiatorial butcheries, savage exterminating wars, and all those barbarous or abominable usages which had so effectually kept down the civilization of the ancient nations, in spite of all their advances in intellectual attainment and material wealth, were everywhere discouraged, and ultimately almost entirely abolished, through the tacit influence of Christianity. By a juster title than even that liberal education to which the poet assigns it, might Christianity claim as her motto and profession—

'Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.'[1]

With unquestionable right did the early Christians claim to be exempted from suspicion and from persecution, as the benefactors, and not the enemies of the state.

[1] 'Softens the manners, nor suffers them to be fierce.'—Ovid, *Epist. ex Ponto*, lib. ii., ep. ix., l. 47, 48.

Augustine advanced nothing but what was capable of being vindicated on the largest scale, by the testimony of facts, when he challenged those who affirmed that the doctrine of Jesus Christ was contrary to the welfare of the republic, to produce armies composed of such soldiers as that doctrine required those in the profession of arms to be, or to make the people of the provinces—husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, kings and judges, tax-gatherers and tax-payers—such, each in his own sphere, as the doctrine of Jesus Christ demands. 'We shall see,' he adds, 'if they will dare, after that, to say that this doctrine is averse to the welfare of the republic, or whether they will not rather be constrained, on the contrary, to acknowledge that nothing could be more beneficial if men would but practise it.'[1] Challenge of Augustine.

Among other parts of the Roman empire which, at an early period, received the blessings of Christianity, were the islands of Britain. Here the same transforming, elevating, amelioRating influence was exemplified in connexion with the preaching of the Gospel as in other places. Britain became gradually the scene of advancing civilization and refinement. And though the Saxon invasion, with the wars and disorders that followed it, for a time plunged all things into a state of renewed barbarism and darkness, this only afforded Christianity a new opportunity of proving her power to elevate and purify. True, the form in which she came back in the times of The effect of Christianity on Britain.

[1] *Ep.* 138, *ad. Marcellin*, § 15.

the Heptarchy was less pure and spiritual than that in which she had appeared in Romano-Celtic Britain. During the interval which had elapsed between the first introduction of Christianity into these islands, and its restoration in Saxon England by the mission of Augustine, a process of degeneracy had been going rapidly forward in the Church. But, nevertheless, she still retained enough of her early excellence to make her appearance in any heathen country a blessing to its inhabitants.

Macaulay on the early Church.

To use the words of the most eloquent historian of modern times, 'the Church had been deeply corrupted, both by that superstition and by that philosophy against which she had long contended, and over which she had at last triumphed. She had given a too easy admission to doctrines borrowed from the ancient schools, and to rites borrowed from the ancient temples. Roman policy and Gothic ignorance, Grecian ingenuity and Syrian asceticism, had contributed to deprave her. Yet she retained enough of the sublime theology and benevolent morality of her earlier days to elevate many intellects and to purify many hearts.'[1] From that time to the present, her influence has been such that no one can hesitate to pronounce her the greatest benefactress our country has had.

Influences outside Christianity.

Other causes, indeed, have been at work to produce that state of social, intellectual, and material eminence which the people of these islands have reached. If our country now sits as 'a queen among the nations,' this is a

[1] Macaulay, *History of England*, vol. i. p. 6.

result which has been brought about, not by the labours of a few years, or the operation of any one influence, or any one class of influences. Many and long-working have been the sources out of which this greatness has grown. The bravery of warriors, the wisdom of senators, the household virtues and graces of mothers and maidens, the struggles of patriots, the sufferings of martyrs, the enterprise of merchants, the discoveries of philosophy, the might of letters, the potency of deep and solitary thought,—these, and such as these, have been ever-active elements in our social system, by which the grandeur and felicity of our country have, in the lapse of centuries, and by God's blessing, been greatly advanced.

But over and above these, the influence of Christianity has been paramount—not only as itself the most powerful of the agencies at work, but as the one from which most of the others have derived their sustaining impulse and beneficent tendency. Without it, neither would the evil that is inherent in some of them have been rendered indirectly conducive to good, nor would the good that is in others have had a sufficient impulse to call it forth. The soul-quickening, enlightening, elevating, sanctifying, and softening power of the religion of Christ is that which has alone caused these different, and, in some cases, conflicting elements to work together for good.

'Christianity,' says a great historian, who manifests a greater predilection for antiquity, and even for the oriental world, but whose comprehensive intellect often rightly appreciates Schlegel on Christianity.

the benign influence of this religion, which with us must have the priority,—'Christianity was the electric spark which first roused the warlike nations of the world, rendered them susceptible of a higher civilization, stamped the peculiar character, and founded the political institutions of modern nations, which have sprung out of such heterogeneous elements.'[1]

Interest of the history.

Since our country owes so much to the influence of Christianity, there is no Englishman of right feeling who will not eagerly desire to peruse the history of the introduction and progress, the fates and conflicts, the successes or the reverses of this mighty power in our land. It is the design of this volume to furnish such information as can be procured regarding the *earliest* period of its existence within our shores. It will be the duty of the author to inquire whence, and by what means, the religion of Christ came into Britain at first; to narrate its progress during the period of its earliest establishment, and to indicate the circumstances which led to the temporary decay of its influence, and to the return of the reign of idolatry in our land. Over many parts of this field of investigation much obscurity hangs, and on many points of no small interest it is impossible to arrive at any but conjectural results. Still, the labours of some very learned and acute writers have not been directed towards this subject altogether in vain; light has been cast upon many points that seemed hopelessly obscure; and in regard to others, it has been

[1] Fr. Schlegel, *Philosophy of History*, p. 342, Bohn's edit.

satisfactorily ascertained that nothing can be now known. The field may thus be regarded as explored, and the history of the ancient British churches can no longer be regarded as impossible.[1]

[1] The principal works are those of Ussher, *Britanicarum Ecclesiarum Antiquitates*. Dublin, 1639, 4to (*Works*, Dublin, 1864, 8vo, vols. v., vi.).—Stillingfleet, *Origines Britannicæ; or, The Antiquities of the British Churches*. London, 1685. Sm. folio (London, 8vo, 1840).—Dr. Henry, in his *History of England*, 6 vols. 4to, London, 1771, has given a good synopsis of the principal facts. The *Researches into the Ecclesiastical and Political State of Ancient Britain under the Roman Emperors*, by the Rev. Francis Thackeray, A.M., 2 vols. 8vo, London, 1843, may be consulted with much advantage: it is carefully compiled and is accurate. To these works the author has been indebted throughout, and the editions specified are those referred to in the following pages. Works occasionally used are noticed in their proper places. Whilst gratefully availing himself of these helps, the author, however, has, in all cases where practicable, consulted the original authorities. [In addition to the foregoing works, the reader may consult with advantage the *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents relating to Great Britain and Ireland*, by the late A. W. Haddan and Bishop Stubbs (1869–73); also *Chapters on English Church History*, by Prof. Bright, 2nd ed., 1888, ch. i.; and an *Essay on the Ancient British Church*, by the Rev. John Pryce, M.A., 1878. A brief and fascinating narrative of the period is given by the late Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, vol. v.]

CHAPTER II.

THE WAY OF THE LORD PREPARED IN SOUTH BRITAIN.

> Roma . . . al sol suo nome
> Infra il Tago, e l'Eufrate; infra l'adusta
> Siene, e la divisa ultima ignota
> Boreale Albione; al sol suo nome
> Trema ogni gente." ALFIERI (*Cæsar loq.*).
>
> Rome . . . at her sole name,
> From Tagus to Euphrates, from the scorched
> Syene to where, severed and afar,
> 'Mid unknown regions Boreal Albion lies—
> At her sole name each nation trembles.

THE history of the British Islands may be said to commence with the invasion of Kent by Julius Cæsar, in the year 54 before Christ. Britain was not then for the first time, strictly speaking, discovered. Its existence, and some of its productions, had been known in other parts of the world long before this. In the treatise ascribed to Aristotle, entitled *περὶ κόσμου*, *Of the Cosmos* (or *Universe*), the author says, 'Beyond the Pillars of Hercules is the ocean which surrounds the earth; in it are two very large islands, called Britannica; these are Albion and Ierne,' etc. (§ 3). Unhappily, there is every reason to believe that this work is spurious, and that its authorship is to be ascribed to some period posterior to the commencement of the Christian era; other-

The beginnings of British history.

wise we should be constrained to believe that in the age of Alexander the Great, more than three centuries before the birth of Christ, learned Greeks not only knew of the existence of the British Islands, but were acquainted with them by their Celtic names.[1]

It is certain, however, that, at a period much earlier than this, Britain was known and traded with by the Phœnicians—that marvellous people, who, inhabiting a territory not more than one hundred and twenty miles in length and twenty in breadth, not only spread their commerce along the whole shore of the Mediterranean, but unfurled their sails in the unknown seas beyond the Pillars of Hercules, formed colonies for commercial purposes along the eastern shores of the Atlantic, and even circumnavigated Africa, beginning, as Herodotus tells us, at the Red Sea, and proceeding southwards, until they had doubled the southern cape, after which they returned to their own country by the Straits of Gibraltar.[2] The Phœnicians.

[1] Ussher, Camden, Bochart, and others, appeal to a line in the *Argonautics* of Orpheus (the authorship of which they ascribe to Onomacritus, B.C. 520), as evidence that Ireland was known by name to the Greeks at a still earlier period. But later investigators have consigned this work also to the class of forgeries. Hermann, Matthiae, and other German scholars, ascribe the composition of it to the fourth century of the Christian era, which is, we are inclined to think, too late. See Matthiae, *Grundriss der Geschichte der Gr. und Rom. Lit.*, § 150, 3te. Aufl.

[2] Herod., lib. iv. c. xlii. In this voyage he tells us nearly three years were consumed. He adds, with amusing *naïveté*, 'They affirmed that in sailing round Libya (Africa) they had the sun on the right hand, which I, indeed, do not believe, though another may.'

These great commercial adventurers were the first civilized nation, so far as we know, which became acquainted with Britain; and one can hardly resist the fancy that they must have conveyed to our shores some imperishable impulse towards maritime adventure, for, in later ages, Britain has played exactly the same part among the nations of the earth, on that wider sphere which the progress of discovery has opened, which Phœnicia played in the earlier time, within the narrower limits to which geographical knowledge, in the epoch of her glory, extended. In limited extent of surface, in courage, skill, and perseverance of enterprise, in commercial success, and vastness of colonial dependency, and not least, in beneficent influence upon the nations of the earth, the parallel between the ancient and the modern countries holds with remarkable exactness.

Parallel between Britain and Phœnicia.

Phœnicia was originally one of the smallest states of antiquity — Britain was originally one of the smallest states of the modern world. Phœnicia was the home of arts and letters when Greece and Italy were inhabited by rude, ignorant, and half-naked barbarians— Britain has been for many ages the most bountiful patron of learning, and the most successful cultivator of the useful arts in the world. Phœnicia, successful in manufactures, became the pioneer of traffic among distant nations, and through the prowess and ability of her mariners, was, while her state lasted, the unquestioned queen of the seas —Britain's manufacturing resources have left those of all other peoples behind, and her maritime enterprise is such that there is hardly a harbour in the

world where her flag is not seen, scarcely a sea that is not ploughed by her ships, and not a nation that has been able to wrest from her the empire of the waves.

Phœnicia, in fine, was the great propagator of civilization and letters in the ancient world—Britain has fulfilled the same high function in more recent times, carrying in her ships the materials of a higher civilization than those which any ancient nation could communicate, teaching by her colonists and missionaries the use of letters to many savage tribes, and introducing social order and beneficent institutions among peoples who were living in all the lawlessness and confusion of the lowest savageism.

There is a point, however, at which the parallel stops—and stops to the honour of Britain. Phœnicia carried with her many cruel and many obscene rites, which she taught the nations to adopt, in place of the simpler and purer traditionary faiths that had hitherto lingered among them. From this reproach Britain stands free; for though, unhappily, some of her sons have been instrumental in introducing savage nations to the knowledge and practice of vices formerly unknown to them, this evil has been more than counterbalanced by the systematic and extensive efforts which others of her subjects have put forth, to make known throughout the world the holy, heavenly, elevated religion of Christ—that religion which alone can heal the wounds and repair the mischiefs occasioned by her in the earth. Let us indulge the hope, that as it was the idolatries and impurities of Phœnicia which wrought her downfall,

Contrast between Phœnicia and Britain.

by bringing on her the judgments of God, the pious zeal which British Christians have shown for the diffusion of the Divine glory in the world, may prove acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, and draw down upon our country the blessing of Him who hath said, 'Them that honour Me I will honour' (1 Sam. ii. 30).

Discovery of Britain. Date impossible to be fixed.

At what time the Phœnicians first visited Britain, and to what extent they were acquainted with it, are points involved in much obscurity. Pliny ascribes the discovery of the island to Melcartus, the Tyrian Hercules, an opinion in which Sir Isaac Newton concurs.[1] If this were certain, it would lead us to conclude that, at least one thousand years before Christ, our island had been visited by the emissaries of the merchant princes of the east; but the opinion rests on such a very slight basis of historical evidence, that we cannot attach much importance to it. At the same time, we know that before the date of Homer's Poems both lead and amber had been introduced into Asia Minor by the Phœnicians;[2] and as the only sources of the former of these known to the ancients were in Britain, while the latter has never at any period been found, except in the district bordering on the Baltic, it seems hard to resist the inference that the ships of Phœnicia must, at least as early as 500 B.C., have explored the northern seas,

[1] *Chronol.*, p. 112.

[2] In *Il.* 24, v. 80, Homer says of Iris, when she went to summon the sea-goddess Thetis, that she sank into the deep like a lump of *lead* (μολυβδαινη ἰκέλη). From *Od.* xv. 459, and xviii. 295, it appears that amber was used in ornaments, and as an article of commerce.

and been acquainted with our island.[1] Whatever knowledge, however, they may have possessed of this side of Europe, they seem, according to their usual policy, to have kept carefully concealed from the rest of the world.[2]

Influence of the Phœnicians.

It would be interesting to know what influence, and whether any, these ancient traffickers had on the rude inhabitants of those parts of Britain which they visited. But over this subject an impenetrable veil hangs. It is even uncertain whether they so much as landed on our shores; for their usage being rather to establish their colonies on islands adjoining to the countries with which they traded, than to incur the risk of disturbing their relations with the inhabitants of those countries by any attempt to settle within their boundaries,[3] it is extremely probable that their intercourse with Britain was confined to visits to the Scilly Islands, where they undoubtedly had settlements, and whence they could trade with the inhabitants of the neighbouring coasts of Cornwall and Devon.

[1] In the geographical poem of Festus Avienus, entitled *Ora Maritima*, and which he says he compiled from original sources (*'fulcit hæc fides petita longe et eruta ex auctoribus,'*) mention is made of a voyage of survey, by Himilco, a Carthaginian officer, in the northern seas, and which occupied about four months. Of this, Himilco wrote an account, which, it is presumed, Festus had seen.

[2] 'I know not,' says the garrulous and inquisitive Herodotus, 'the islands called Cassiterides (the Scilly Islands), whence the tin (*κασσίτερος*) comes to us.'—Lib. vii. c. xxxvi. 'The Phœnicians,' says Strabo, speaking of the Cassiterides, 'alone at first traded thither, and concealed the route from all.'—Lib. iii. p. 175.

[3] Thucyd., *Hist.*, lib. vi. c. ii.

Learned men have indeed endeavoured to prove that in the religious rites used by the ancient British, and in the names of many of the places along the coast, traces are to be found of the influence exerted by the Phœnicians.[1] But such evidence, though it may lead to some interesting conclusions as to the affinities of faiths and languages, proves nothing in regard to the question here at issue; for it leaves untouched the essential point on which the whole turns, namely, whether these affinities are to be traced to *intercourse* between the Phœnicians and Britons after they had long existed as separate peoples, or are to be viewed as remnants, mutually preserved by both, of early community of belief and speech.

There is a curious story, given by several of our

[1] Bochart is the principal advocate of this opinion; and in his *Geographia Sacra*, lib. i. c. xlii., he has said all that his stupendous erudition enabled him to say upon it. But it is enough to reply to him, that the words he has traced to the Phœnician are pure Celtic, and that there is no reason whatever to suppose that the ancient Britons borrowed these from the Phœnicians, any more than the numerous other names of places and persons for which no such origin can be pretended. Why, out of twenty Celtic names, should two or three be held to have been borrowed from the Phœnician because ingenious and learned men find a similarity between them and some Phœnician words? Or if this proves that the Phœnicians had colonies in Britain, would it not prove as much for the Jews, the Hindoos, or any other people whose language shows affinity with the Celtic? Some of Bochart's etymologies are amusingly ingenious; thus, the word *Britannia* he deduces from ברת־אנך (*barat-anac*) 'the land of tin.' *Silures*, the name of the ancient inhabitants of Herefordshire, Monmouth, and adjoining counties, he derives from the Arabic *sirval*, pl. *sirvalîm*, that is, men wearing trews, from which name, says he, the Romans gave them, by metathesis, the name Silures, to discriminate them from the other settlers in Britain, etc.—Lib. i. c. xxxix.

early British historians,[1] of an invasion of this island by an Italian prince of Trojan descent, named Brut or Brude, by whom the country was subdued, and from whom it took its name of Britain. This story is no doubt a myth,[2] but it has been suggested that it may possibly have had some foundation in fact, as it is not impossible that some of the fugitives from Troy may have reached Britain in Phœnician vessels.[3]

Mythical invasion of Brut.

After the fall of Tyre, Carthage monopolized, for some time, the trade to Britain,[4] but found an early rival in Greece. As far back as five hundred years before Christ, the Phocæans, a people of Greece, had established a colony at Marseilles; and it is stated, that about two hundred years afterwards, Pytheas, an inhabitant of that city, made a voyage round the British islands, and was driven as far as Thule, or Iceland. As this, however, rests on the authority of Pytheas himself, and as Strabo, who relates it, is continually complaining of that traveller's proneness to falsehood (though apparently not so justly liable to this charge as some others of Strabo's authorities), we know not how much weight to attach to this statement.

Connexion with Carthage and Greece.

[1] Nennius, Geoffrey of Monmouth, Giraldus Cambriensis, etc.

[2] 'A grave bishop,' says the facetious Fuller, 'in his sermon, speaking of Brut's coming into this land, said it was but a *bruit*.'—*Worthies of England*.

[3] Thackeray, *Researches*, vol. i. p. 6.

[4] There is a foolish statement made by a Jew of the ninth century, Gorionidas, to the effect that Hannibal 'subdued the Britons who dwelt amid the ocean.' This we know to have been impossible, from the history of Hannibal, as given by Livy and Polybius.

It is certain, however, that the Greeks carried on a trade with Britain for several generations. In their hands the traffic gradually assumed a different character from what it had whilst monopolized by the Carthaginians. 'The tin, lead, and skins of Britain, instead of being immediately shipped in Scilly, Cornwall, and other maritime districts, are said to have been taken to the Isle of Wight, thence transported to Vennes, and other ports of Brittany, afterwards conveyed overland to Marseilles, and finally exported to all parts of the world which traded with the Greeks.'[1]

At a later period, the Romans appeared also upon the field as competitors in this traffic. The colony which they established at Narbonne, about one hundred and forty years before the Christian era, became speedily the chief emporium of commerce in Gaul, and doubtless drew to it a large measure of the trade with Britain.[2]

First certain information about Britain.

It has been thought desirable to collect these notices of early connexion between Britain and other parts of the world. But it will be perceived that the information they supply is exceedingly scanty, and rests on a very precarious basis. The *history* of the island, as we have said, begins with the visit to it of Julius Cæsar; for though he did little more than visit it—though on his first landing on its shores he did not penetrate many miles from the coast, and on his second, fought his way, amidst continual difficulties, only as far as St. Albans—though he made no

[1] Thackeray, i. 18.
[2] Strabo. Lib. iv. p. 186. Ausonius, *De claris urbibus.*

permanent conquest of any part of the island, and could with difficulty maintain the reputation of his victorious name against the fierce valour of the natives, yet it is to his visit that Britain owes, for the first time, her place in the written annals of the world.

Tacitus on Cæsar.

What Tacitus says of Cæsar very correctly describes the amount of what he achieved in Britain: 'The first of the Romans who entered Britain with an army was the divine Julius; and though he, by successful fighting, struck terror into the inhabitants, and made himself master of the coast, he may be viewed rather as having showed the country to those who came after him than to have delivered it to them.'[1] Even from Cæsar's own account, it is evident that he found the Barbarians much better soldiers than he had anticipated, and that he was not sorry to leave the island upon such terms as might not disgrace him in the eyes of his countrymen. But brief as was the period of his stay in Britain, and transient as were the traces of the successes he gained over its inhabitants, the results of his having showed it to the civilized world were neither slight nor short-lived. A connexion was thereby established between this island and the regions beyond the Alps, at that time the central sphere of the arts, the learning, and the civilization of the world; and during the century which intervened between Cæsar's retreat and the return of the Romans under Aulus Plautius, (A.D. 43,) a mighty change had been effected in the habits, usages, tendencies, and spirit of the people.

[1] *Agricola*, c. xiii.

It is plain, even from Cæsar's account,[1] that the early Britons were not such ignorant barbarians as it has often been the pleasure of modern writers to depict them. The rude valour with which they withstood the assaults of the first soldiers, led on by the first general of the age, has been frequently celebrated. But it was by something more than rude valour that this was achieved. In military tactics and the machinery of warfare they had evidently made great proficiency. As a general, Cassivelaunus was little inferior to Cæsar himself; and it often required all the skill and experience of the latter, as well as the utmost vigilance on the part of his troops, to prevent his being out-manœuvred by his antagonist.

Knowledge of the Early Britons.

The furniture of the Britons for the field of battle was such as to excite the astonishment, and, in some instances, to awaken the terror of the veteran legionaries of Rome. Nor was it only in the department of warfare that they displayed ingenuity and a comparatively advanced stage of progress. Cæsar tells us they had a medium of exchange in the shape of iron rings of a fixed weight, and even brass money. There is reason, also, to believe, that, in their personal ornaments, and especially in those of their chiefs, much ingenuity of workmanship was displayed.

With all this, however, their condition (with the exception of a few on the coast of Kent, who had borrowed some refinement from the opposite shores of the continent), was that

Barbarism in Britain.

[1] *De Bello Gallico.* Lib. iv. 18; v. 19.

of barbarians, when viewed in relation to the arts of life and the usages of society. They knew little or nothing of agriculture. Their dwellings were miserable huts of logs and clay. Their dress was made of skins, torn from wild beasts, or from the cattle used by them for food, and rudely prepared for use. Though inhabiting an island plentifully supplied with navigable streams, estuaries, and lakes, they had no vessels better than coracles, which were formed of slight ribs of wood, and covered with hides. In domestic life they had adopted some of the worst practices of heathen licentiousness—practices disgusting even to the Romans themselves. Their religion was one which held them enslaved to many gloomy rites, and to the power of an hereditary and tyrannical priesthood. Druidism, if it was theoretically superior to the gross idolatry which prevailed in other parts of the world, was, in practice, impotent to conduct them to refinement, or even to preserve them from sinking into the grossest social degradation.[1]

Arts of civilization introduced from Rome.

The intercourse opened by the visit of Julius Cæsar between Britain and the continent, and the visits which some of the native princes appear to have made even to Rome itself, gradually introduced many of the arts of civilization into this island. We find as one evidence of this, and one still subject to our investigation, that, instead of the rings of metal and the rude attempts at coinage which before supplied the place of money, great numbers of elegant coins,

[1] See the volume on '*Iona*,' by the author of the present work, p. 59.

in gold, silver, and copper, were struck by the British princes. As several of these bear, as is supposed, the legend '*Tascia*,' it has been conjectured that they were struck for the purpose of paying tribute to the Romans—*Tasc* being the British word for tribute, and *Tascyd* for a collector of tribute, from which it is inferred that Tascia signifies the *Denarius tributi*, or tribute-coin.

This conjecture, which is due to Dr. Powell, whom Camden styles '*eruditissimus venerandæ antiquitatis indagator*' (a most erudite explorer of venerable antiquity), is very ingenious, but it has not met with the approval of some of our best antiquarians. Mr. Pegge has suggested,[1] that the word in question on these coins is the name of the Roman artist whom the British prince employed to fabricate them, but this appears still less probable than the conjecture of Powell. To us, looking at the specimen engraved by Camden, it is strongly suggested that all the learned antiquarianism that has been expended on this subject has been, like much ingenious conjecture of the same sort, thrown away in consequence of a misreading of the legend. On one side of the coin are the letters TAS — CI — A surrounding a horse at full gallop; and on the reverse are the letters VER, surrounded by a wreath. Now, there is no necessity for beginning to read the word on the obverse side with the letters TAS; this may be the *last*, as probably as it may the *first* syllable. Then, it appears that considerable obscurity attaches to the single A, in which case it may be allowed to conjecture that it is not an A at

[1] In an *Essay on the Coins of Cunobelin.*

all, but v i (for in an ancient coin the letters vi may easily, if the first limb of the v is obscure, be mistaken for a or a). We would, therefore, read the whole Civitas Ver., that is, Verulamium, and understand the meaning of it to be, that the coin was struck at St. Alban's, the ancient Verulamium.[1]

But whatever advantages of a social kind were reaped by the Britons from their intercourse with the Romans subsequent to the visit of Julius Cæsar, there can be little doubt that his invasion paved the way for the introduction of Christianity into the northern part of our island.

Introduction of Christianity to Britain.

At what time Christianity first visited our shores is, indeed, altogether unknown; but that it must have found its way hither at an early period, perhaps before the close of the first century, seems established on grounds of considerable firmness. In proof of this may be adduced the following testimonies from early Christian writers, entirely unconnected with Britain.

The first is that of Tertullian, who flourished in the latter part of the second century. In one of his works, written against the Jews, he uses the following appeal: 'In whom other than in the Christ, who has already come, do all the nations believe? For in Him have believed the most different peoples,—Parthians, Medes, Elamites, those who inhabit Mesopotamia, Armenia, Phrygia,

Testimony of Tertullian.

[1] Every one who has seen any ancient British coins knows that nothing is more common than for the legend to bear the name of the city where the coin was struck. The writer has in his possession one bearing the inscription Civitas Ebor., to show that it had been struck at York.

Cappadocia, the dwellers in Pontus, Asia, and Pamphylia, those occupying Egypt, and inhabiting the region of Africa beyond Cyrene — Romans and natives, even Jews dwelling in Jerusalem and other nations—nay, the different tribes of the Getulians and many territories of the Moors, all parts of Spain, the different peoples of Gaul, *and parts of Britain not reached by the Romans, but subjugated to Christ*, also of the Sarmatians, Dacians, Germans, and Scythians, as well as many obscure peoples and provinces unknown to us, and which we cannot enumerate;—in all these, the name of the Christ who has already come reigns.' [1]

Now, without inquiring here what part of Britain Tertullian probably had in view when he spoke of 'places not yet reached by the Romans,' it is evident that he meant in this passage to convey the idea that Christianity had so widely spread among the indigenous people of these islands, that even in the remoter corners of the country, persons were found in considerable numbers who had embraced the religion of Jesus Christ. He not merely adduces Britain generally as having received the Gospel, but he signalizes the fact, that the latter had penetrated further than the Romans, though at the time Tertullian wrote, they were in possession of the country from the sea-board of Kent and Sussex to the wall of Antoninus, between the Firth of Clyde and the Firth of Forth. Nor does he content himself with simply intimating that a few converts had been made in these remote parts; his language conveys

[1] *Adv. Judæos*, c. vii. Opp. ed. Leopold, part. iv. p. 303. Lips., 1841. (Tr., Clark For. Theol. Lib., vol iii. p. 218).

the impression that Christianity had advanced sufficiently far among their inhabitants to entitle him to say that they had been subjugated to Christ.

From a statement such as this, made at the end of the second, or the beginning of the third century, we may justly infer that Christianity had been known in Britain at least in the early part of the second century, if not in the closing part of the first. When we consider that it had innumerable disadvantages to contend against in a country such as Britain was at the time, and that it had to win its way by the tardy process of individual conversion, without any great popular movement to help it forward, and without any machinery of evangelistic operations, we shall at once perceive that before it could have penetrated into districts so remote, or so difficult, that they had not been reached by the Roman legions, a very long period of time must have elapsed.

The worth of the statement from which this is inferred will of course depend upon the weight to be attached to the testimony of Tertullian. Its trustworthiness. But there seems no reason for calling that at all in question. It is true that Tertullian's style is rhetorical, but it is so simply as all energetic and impassioned writing is rhetorical. There is no evidence that he was wont to sacrifice truth to his love of effect, or even that he indulged in exaggeration or misleading hyperbole. He writes usually with vehemence, and his statements are commonly strong and unqualified, as belonged to his African nature and his hot blood. But he knew too well his position and his perils as a Christian advocate to

hazard statements on *matters of fact*, without taking care to be satisfied that they were such as could not be disproved. Besides, in the case before us, we have evidence of his truthfulness in the care he takes to discriminate between what he affirms from *knowledge* and what he advances in reference to peoples unknown to him, and of whose conversion to the Gospel consequently he will not speak as he speaks of the others.

That Tertullian, living at a time when the affairs of Britain were much before the public notice, and when the state of things there could be very fully known by all educated and inquiring persons in most parts of the Roman empire, had the means of satisfying himself as to the actual progress of Christianity there, it would be absurd to doubt; and not less so would it be to suppose that, in an argument, the whole force of which rests on the accuracy of the facts he affirms, a man of his sense and experience would advance what he had not fully satisfied himself to be capable of standing the test of his antagonist's scrutiny. 'Tertullian,' as Bishop Stillingfleet observes, 'was a man of too much understanding to expose himself to the contempt of the Jews by mentioning this as a thing so well known at that time, if the Britons were then known to be no Christians. . . . When, therefore, such a passage doth not fall by chance from such a writer, but the force of an argument depends upon it, it is of so much greater weight. How ridiculous would it appear for a man to prove that Popery is the Catholic religion by instancing not only in Italy and Spain as the nations where it is universally

received, but in Great Britain, and Denmark, and Sweden! No less was the absurdity, then, to prove Christ's universal kingdom by enumerating Gaul and Britain with other nations where Christ was worshipped, if there were no Christian churches at that time in being among them.'[1]

Origen, who may be regarded as the contemporary of Tertullian, attests repeatedly the fact, that in his day the conversion of the British to Christianity was well known. To give only one instance; in his sixth Homily on the first chapter of Luke, he says, 'The power of the Lord the Saviour is also with those who, *in Britain, are separated from our orb*, and those who are in Mauritania, with all under the sun who have believed in his name.'[2] As Origen probably wrote this at Cæsarea, in Palestine, the fact must have long existed to have travelled thither, and become so familiar to the people as to admit of being freely referred to in public discourse.

Testimony of Origen.

Coming down to the fourth century, we have a very important testimony from Eusebius, the church historian, as to the early introduction of Christianity into Britain. In his work written in defence of Christianity, among other arguments which he urges, is that drawn from the *success* of the Gospel—a success attained under the

Testimony of Eusebius.

[1] *Antiquities*, p. 51.

[2] Compare also Hom. 4 *in Ezech.* From a passage in a treatise (28 *in Matt.*), ascribed to Origen, it is evident that, assuming the homily to be genuine, the numbers of converts in Britain in his day did not equal those who were still heathens. He speaks of 'the greater part not having yet heard the word of the Gospel.'

most unfavourable circumstances, and by means of agents such as mere human wisdom would not have selected for such a work. Writing on this subject, he says—we quote the whole passage, because of its general interest—'Further, consider this also. If they [the apostles] were seducers and deceivers, they were at the same time men of no education, belonging entirely to the common people—nay, one might almost say barbarians, and knowing no language but that of the Syrians. How, then, did they come to advance through the whole world? By what state of mind did they devise to dare such a thing? By what power, when they did attempt it, have they succeeded? We may grant that even rustics, traversing their own district to deceive and be deceived, might increase by not letting the matter rest. But that they should preach the name of Jesus to all—that they should announce His marvellous works in country and city—that some of them should take possession of Rome itself, the head and queen of cities—that others should occupy the kingdom of the Persians—others that of the Armenians—others that of the Parthians—others even that of the Scythians; that some should have penetrated to the ends of the earth, and the country of the Indians; and others *should have crossed the ocean to those islands called British:* such things I will not believe to be according to man [effected by mere human power], nor to be in the power of persons of no weight or standing, least of all to be performable by cheats and tricksters.'[1]

[1] *Demonst. Evangel.*, lib. iii. c. vii. p. 112. D. ed., Colon., 1688.

In this passage the writer not only attests the existence of Christianity in Britain at the date of his writing, but he intimates that it was carried thither by some of the first missionaries of the cross, the apostles or their companions. We may receive or reject this tradition as to the *persons* by whose agency the work was effected, according as evidence may seem to us to require; but it would be attaching too little credit to the statement of a writer of such authority as Eusebius, were we to call in question the *fact*, that within, or near to, the apostolic age, Christianity had been introduced into this island.

Eusebius was imbued with a strong desire to investigate all facts connected with the history of Christianity. Jerome, who was no particular friend of his, relates a story which redounds greatly to his credit in this respect. 'When the emperor Constantine,' says he, 'entered Cæsarea, and invited the bishop to ask something that would be of advantage to the church at Cæsarea, Eusebius is said to have replied, that the church, enriched by her own resources, did not stand in need of any favours, but that he himself was the subject of an incessant desire to ascertain, by investigating the public documents with careful scrutiny, whatever had been done against the saints in the Roman republic by successive judges, throughout the whole empire, and prayed that the emperor would direct extracts to be sent to him from the public archives as to what martyrs had suffered, by what judge, in what province or city, on what day, and with what fortitude they had obtained the palm of suffering. Hence it came to pass that, being a

Enthusiasm of Eusebius.

competent relater, he both constructed an ecclesiastical history, and, as a diligent historiographer, has recorded the trophies of almost all the martyrs in all the Roman provinces.'[1]

Other testimonies to the zeal, enthusiasm, and diligence of the great church historian might be abundantly adduced from ancient writers, so that no suspicion can attach to his testimony on this ground. It is also certain that from the favour in which he stood with the emperor Constantine, he not only had at all times access to the most authentic sources of intelligence, but seems even to have frequently received from the emperor himself, either personally or by letter, information of what was going on in the department in which he was chiefly interested.[2]

Sources of information of Eusebius. His veracity.

From Constantine's connection with Britain, and the lively interest which his mother, Helena, herself a British lady,[3] took in all matters connected with the early history of Christianity, we may believe that peculiar facilities would be afforded to Eusebius for

[1] *Epist. ad Chromatium et Heliodorum.*

[2] Of this abundant evidence is afforded by Eusebius himself, in his *Life of Constantine.*

[3] There are few things in history more romantic than the account of the fortunes of Helena. The daughter of a British innkeeper, who seems to have kept a wayside inn on one of the great Roman roads in Britain, and acting in her father's establishment as hostelress (*stabularia*), won the affections of a Roman general, who, not ashamed of his choice, united himself to her in honourable marriage. And so the lowly British maiden came to be the mother of the emperor of the world. [But the connection of Helena with Britain is questioned by some historians. See Pryce, *Ancient British Church* p. 77, note.]

knowing what was the condition and history of the church in that country. That his integrity in narrating what he knew was equal to his opportunities of acquiring knowledge, it would, perhaps, be too much to affirm; at the same time, the only charge that can be substantiated against him in this respect, is not one which will greatly impair his testimony in the case before us. There is reason to believe that sometimes he has not told *all* the truth, when his doing so would have cast discredit upon the fame of some favourite martyr, or given the adversary an opportunity of reproaching the Christian cause. But that he in any case has stated for truth what he had no reason to regard as such, there is not the slightest evidence to prove. On the contrary, he seems to have been scrupulous not to commit himself in this way; so that when he asserts anything positively, we may, with confidence, accept it as at least what he himself regarded as truth.

Besides, in the case before us, there was nothing to be gained by his adducing a falsehood. There were multitudes of places where the gospel indubitably had penetrated, to which he could have appealed in proof of his assertion as effectively as to Britain; so that, had he adduced the latter as a place where, from an early period, Christianity had found a footing, when he knew that such was not the case, he would have gone out of his way very gratuitously to utter a falsehood. On the ground, then, of his general veracity as a historian, his zeal in obtaining full and exact information on matters connected with the history of Christianity, and the unusually favourable opportunities he enjoyed of gratifying

that zeal, especially in regard to Britain—we may without much hesitation, receive as a fact what he has attested concerning the introduction of Christianity into that country.

A testimony of a similar kind is given by Theodoret, bishop of Cyrus, in the beginning of the fifth century.

Testimony of Theodoret.

Speaking of the humble origin of the first propagators of Christianity, in connexion with the success of their efforts, he exclaims: 'These our fishermen, publicans, tentmakers, persuaded not only the Romans and their subjects, but also the Scythians, Sauromatæ, Indians, Persians, Seræ, Hyrcanians, *Britons*, Cimmerians, and Germans, to embrace the religion of Him who had been crucified.' [1]

Tradition in Britain.

These testimonies, from men of undoubted reputation, show that the belief was widely diffused through the ancient Church that Britain had been evangelized near to, if not actually within the apostolic age. In Britain itself, the tradition was preserved in a still more definite form; for Gildas, the earliest of our historians, (or whoever wrote the tract that passes under his name, for it seems very doubtful if such a man as Gildas ever existed,) [2] fixes the date of the introduction of the Gospel into our island somewhere about the time when Boadicea was defeated by the Romans, under Suetonius Paulinus. His words are, after describing

[1] Opp. tom. iv., ser. ix., p. 610, quoted by Henry, *History of Great Britain*, i. 123.

[2] See Wright's *Biographia Britannica Literaria*.—Anglo-Saxon Period, pp. 115–134. [Comp. Pryce, *Ancient British Church*, p. 64, note.]

the disasters of the Britons at the hands of their conquerors, 'Meanwhile, to this island, stiff with icy cold, and as if withdrawn into a secret corner of the earth, far from the visible sun, Christ granted His radiance, that is, His precepts,—Christ, that true Sun, who, not from the firmament of time merely, but from the summit of the heavens, exceeding all time, showed to the universal world His splendid beams in the latter period, as we know, of Tiberius Cæsar, when his religion was propagated without any impediment, death having been threatened by the prince, in spite of the senate's opposition, to those who should accuse his soldiers (that is, the professors of Christianity).' [1]

These words convey to us what was probably the general belief of the British Christians in the sixth century—a belief founded on traditions which had been handed down amongst them from generation to generation. As to the meaning of the passage, there seems no great room for uncertainty. Bishop Stillingfleet, who has examined it carefully, decides that the writer speaks of a general diffusion of Christianity immediately after the death of Christ, consequent upon the friendly inclinations of Tiberius towards its professors, and intimates, as a result of this, that the Gospel ultimately found its way into South Britain, in the interval which elapsed 'between the time of A. Plautius coming over in the time of Claudius, and the battle between Boadicea and Suetonius Paulinus.' With this latter part of his statement we cannot agree. The words of Gildas plainly intimate that the period designated by him

[1] Gildas, *Historia*, sec. viii., ed. Stevenson.

'meanwhile,' (*interea*,) is the period *subsequent* to the defeat of Boadicea, and during which the Britons were suffering the consequences of her valorous but ill-judged and calamitous revolt. We must place the introduction of Christianity into Britain, therefore, according to the tradition reported by Gildas, somewhere about the year 63 of the Christian era, that is, two years subsequent to the defeat of the British queen.

Details probably invented.

In these older testimonies, nothing is advanced beyond the general fact, that at an early period, stated by most to be within the apostolic age, and fixed by Gildas to the reign of Nero, the Gospel found its way into the southern part of Britain, and had some measure of success among its rude inhabitants. So far, there is nothing incredible in the report, but much, as we shall presently show, in its favour. Later writers, however, not content with this, have descended to more minute details, and have specified individuals as the parties to whom they ascribe the honour of first bearing the message of mercy to our shores; whilst some of them have narrated at length the circumstances under which this blessing was accomplished.

In these narratives, we have what we can consider in no other light than as the invention of monkish ingenuity, proceeding it may be, in some instances, on fragments of traditionary fact, but in the majority exercised without scruple in contriving stories adapted to serve some purpose of priestly aggrandizement, or to gratify the prejudices of rival and jealous parties. The importance which some of

these legends have acquired, from the credit attached to them by eminent writers, renders it necessary that we should briefly attempt to estimate their worth. In doing so, we shall endeavour, whilst showing the historical untenability of each, as it stands in the pages of those who have narrated it, at the same time carefully to select such grains of truth as may appear to be probably mixed up with the mass of dross which we shall feel occasion to reject.

CHAPTER III.

DID ST. PAUL BRING THE GOSPEL TO BRITAIN?

'Wandering through the west,
Did holy Paul awhile in Britain dwell,
And call the fountain forth by miracle,
And with dread signs the nascent stream invest?'

WORDSWORTH.

BEFORE proceeding to the more purely legendary part of our inquiry, it may be proper to consider an opinion which has something more than mere legendary evidence in its favour—an opinion which ascribes the introduction of the Gospel into Britain to an individual whose name stands so high on the roll of Christian worthies, that one may be forgiven for *wishing* that it could be really proved that this boon had come to our island through his hands. This illustrious and venerable name is none other than that of the apostle Paul, whose labours in propagating the Gospel among the Gentiles are said to have been extended as far as to our shores.

Early references to Paul in Britain.

The earliest writer by whom this is distinctly affirmed is Venantius Fortunatus, a French bishop, who lived in the latter half of the sixth century. In a poem which he wrote in Latin heroic verse, in eulogy of St. Martin, this ecclesiastic says, referring to the apostle Paul:—

'Transit et oceanum, vel qua facit insula portum
Quasque Britannus habet terras, quasque ultima Thule.'

Which may be thus rendered:—

'He[1] crossed the ocean, and where'er he found
An island-port, he bade the Gospel sound;
Till British lands and Thule's distant shore
Had heard the blissful tidings which he bore.'

In the beginning of the next century, Sophronius, patriarch of Jerusalem, in a discourse on the merits of the apostle, celebrates Paul's preaching of the Gospel in Spain and Britain. In the Greek Menology, or calendar of saints, under the date 15th of March, it is affirmed that Aristobulus, one of the seventy disciples, and supposed to be the person named by Paul in Rom. xvi. 10, was ordained by that apostle 'bishop in the country of the Britons, men wild and very cruel,' it is added, 'among whom, notwithstanding much harsh treatment received at first from them, he had much success.'

Besides these, no other author of any antiquity mentions expressly this tradition. It is clear that upon such evidence as this nothing can be built with any confidence. Poets are not usually esteemed unimpeachable authorities in matters of fact; and the assertion of a poetical ecclesiastic of the sixth century, as to what happened in the first, is of no authority whatever. The testimony of Sophronius belongs to the seventh century, and may rest upon nothing better than the lines of Venantius; at the best, it only proves that a late tradition had reached

[1] But the passage, read in its connexion, rather means that *it* (*i.e.* the preaching of Paul: 'stylus ille,') crossed the ocean, *etc.* See Haddan and Stubbs, i. 23.

him to the effect that Paul had preached in Britain. To the testimony of the Menology it would be idle to attach any weight—all Martyrologies and Hagiologies are infected with falsehood—that of the Greek church is a chartered repository of fiction and 'old wives' fables.'

Statements of the Fathers.

In the absence of direct testimony of any weight, great stress has been laid upon certain statements of some of the Fathers, which are thought fairly to *imply* that Paul visited Britain. But it is only to those who are predisposed to receive the tradition that these passages can appear in this light. Were the fact already proved from other sources, they might be very advantageously adduced as uttering, if not corroborative, at least consonant assertions. But when they are adduced as *primary* witnesses, they only bring suspicion on the cause they are adduced to support; for nothing can be more vague and general than the testimony they utter. Thus, Clement of Rome,[1] an unimpeachable witness as far as character and age are concerned, merely tells us that Paul, 'after having proclaimed the Gospel both in the east and in the west, and taught righteousness to the whole world, and *having come to the boundary of the west*, and having testified before the rulers,[2] thus left the world, and went to the holy place.'

The whole evidence furnished by this passage in support of Paul's alleged apostolic visit to Britain lies in the very general expression, 'the boundary

[1] *Ep. ad Corinth.*, cap. 5.

[2] Or, 'having suffered martyrdom by the rulers,' (*μαρτυρησας ἐπὶ τῶν ἡγουμένων.*)

of the west,' an expression which, besides this application of it to Britain, has been very differently interpreted by different writers, some holding it to mean Spain, some contending that it designates Rome; one writer suggesting that it denotes Illyricum, whilst others, with more probability, as it appears to us, regard it as merely a rhetorical designation of the western part of the Roman empire.[1] On such an expression it is manifest that little can be built in any way, and least of all, in the way of supporting a hypothesis which it would require very express evidence to substantiate.

Boundary of the west, meaning Britain.

Bishop Stillingfleet, however, contends that there *is* evidence to show, that under the expression 'boundary of the west,' the ancients were accustomed to 'take in Britain,' and that consequently this expression, as used by Clement, affirms Paul's visit to our shores almost as distinctly as if he had used the word 'Britain' itself. But the evidence this writer adduces is altogether insufficient for his purpose, and, indeed, one can hardly help wondering that so acute a man could so far impose upon himself as to imagine that by adducing it he had done anything towards conclusively fixing the meaning of Clement to the precise locality contended for.

That the ocean flowing around Britain was sometimes called by the classical writers 'the western ocean,'—that Eusebius speaks of Britain under the designation of 'the western parts' beyond Gaul,—that Theodoret 'reckons up the inhabitants

[1] See Bishop Lightfoot, *Epistles of St. Clement*, p. 50.

of Spain, of Britain, and of Gaul, (who, saith he, lie between the other two,) as those that dwell in the bounds of the west,'—that Herodotus says, 'the Celtæ are the most western of all Europeans,'—that Catullus calls Britain 'the furthest isle of the west'; and that Arnobius, 'setting down the bounds of the Gospel, east and west, for the east mentions India, and for the west the Britons';[1] may be all perfectly true, and yet prove nothing to the point. For the question is not whether Britain was placed by the ancients in the western ocean, was spoken of as west of Gaul, and was regarded as the furthermost west island; but whether, when Clement spoke of the *term* or *boundary of the west*, he meant Britain, and could mean nothing but Britain.

To this, the real question at issue, none of the passages adduced by Stillingfleet have the least relevancy, except those from Arnobius and Theodoret; and of these, the former simply proves that Britain was the furthest limit westward to which the Gospel had reached, not that it was customary with the ancients to denominate Britain the boundary of the west; in other words, that by calling Britain the western limit of *Christianity*, Arnobius by no means proves that the western limit of the *world* must mean Britain; whilst the latter appears very manifestly to support the interpretation of Clement's words proposed on a preceding page, by showing that the expression 'bounds of the west' was sometimes used to designate the occidental portion of the Roman empire generally.

[1] Stillingfleet, *Antiquities*, p. 38.

The other ancient writers whose testimony has been adduced to prove that Paul had preached in Britain are not one whit more precise in their announcement, or more conclusive in their evidence than Clement. Jerome tells us that Paul 'preached the Gospel in the western parts,'—that, imitating the course of the Sun of righteousness, of which it is written, that His going forth is from the end of heaven, and His circuit unto the ends of it,—he, after having been in Spain, went from one ocean to another, and that his 'diligence in preaching extended as far as the ends of the earth.'[1] Nothing can be more indefinite than this, and it would be absurd to build anything on such testimony.

Indefiniteness of allusions to Paul's travels.

Of all the witnesses, the only one who speaks with any approach to definiteness is Theodoret; but all that he says is, that Paul, after visiting Spain, 'preached salvation to the islands that lie in the ocean.' Cave asserts,[2] that by these 'he *undoubtedly* means Britain,' but with all deference we cannot help thinking that there is great room for doubting if he does. Why not the islands of the Mediterranean ocean, as well as those of the Atlantic? But at any rate, Theodoret, as a writer of the fifth century, is rather too late a witness to be accepted, when his testimony stands alone, as a sufficient authority for anything alleged to have happened in apostolic times.

In the absence of any convincing evidence from

[1] *Catalog. Script. Eccles.*, col. 103. Opp. tom. iv. part. ii. *In Amos.*, c. v. Opp. tom. iii. col. 1412.

[2] *Lives of the Apostles*, vol. ii. p. 290. London, 1834.

external testimony, attempts have been made to infer the fact of Paul having visited Britain, from 'the probability of concurrent circumstances.' These, as enumerated by Bishop Stillingfleet, are, (1) That Paul had leisure and opportunity enough to have come hither; (2) That there was encouragement and invitation enough for him to come; (3) That he was the most likely of all the apostles to have come hither. But, suppose we grant every one of these assertions, what proof is gained of the point in question? Does it at all follow that because Paul *might* have visited Britain, he actually *did* visit it? Is it at all certain, because there was enough in the existing circumstances of Britain strongly to recommend his paying it a visit, that therefore such a visit was really paid, or even that the apostle was so much as aware of these circumstances? Or, as it must be admitted, that it was very unlikely that any of the apostles should travel to Britain—are we to conclude that because that unlikelihood was a little less in the case of Paul than in the case of his brother apostles, it is therefore probable that he actually did travel hither?

Inferences as to Paul's visit to Britain.

We are not disposed, however, to concede the principal fact asserted by Stillingfleet, namely, that Paul had leisure and opportunity enough to have come hither. It appears to us, on any hypothesis that has been advanced as to the closing part of Paul's life, that it is extremely improbable that his circumstances were such as to admit of his visiting Britain, and preaching there.

It will be conceded on all hands, that if the apostle's life closed with the imprisonment at Rome

mentioned in the concluding part of the Acts of the Apostles, the hypothesis of his having visited Britain must be entirely relinquished. We know, too well, the particulars of his active apostolic career antecedent to that imprisonment, to admit of the possibility of interpolating such a visit in the midst of the events narrated or alluded to in the New Testament. If made at all, then, every one will admit that this visit must have been made at a period subsequent to the two years' imprisonment recorded by Luke; and hence those who contend for this opinion proceed upon the hypothesis that the apostle was liberated from this imprisonment, and enjoyed an interval of apostolic activity between that and a second imprisonment, at the close of which he suffered martyrdom. In this interval, then, must be placed his visit to Britain, if ever made, and the question is, Does what we know of the apostle's movements during that interval authorize us to believe that he was likely to make such a visit?

Uncertainty of Paul's visit.

Bishop Stillingfleet replies in the affirmative, and in order to make this good he assumes two things: (1) That the alleged interval lasted for at least eight years; and (2) That all this time was spent by the apostle in the western parts. Of these two positions, on which his entire argument rests, the former is, to say the least, doubtful, while the latter is certainly a mistake.

Arguments of Bishop Stillingfleet.

According to the most accurate chronology of the New Testament, the apostle's voyage to Rome, narrated by Luke, occurred in the spring of the year

61 or 62 of the Christian era. If, then, he was liberated from this captivity, it must have been in 63 or 64. Now, according to the tradition which stands inseparably connected with that of his having been thus liberated, he was again apprehended and incarcerated by Nero, in the thirteenth year of that emperor's reign, that is, in the year 67; so that, at the longest, we cannot assign more than *four* years as the term during which he enjoyed liberty between his first and second imprisonments. This, by Stillingfleet's implied admission, would of itself render it improbable that at that time he could have undertaken a voyage to Britain.

Chronology of Paul's voyage to Rome and imprisonment.

But supposing Paul to have enjoyed this season of reprieve and resumed activity, in what part of the world was it spent? Stillingfleet says, 'in the western parts,' meaning by that, doubtless, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Italy. But those who hold this hypothesis respecting the closing part of the apostle's career maintain, that it was during his second imprisonment that Paul wrote his Epistles to Timothy and Titus, and they adduce the allusions contained in these Epistles, especially the second to Timothy, as furnishing insuperable evidence of the truth of the hypothesis. Now, this is indubitably their stronghold; the allusions in these Epistles are of such a kind, that it is not easy to account for them on any other hypothesis; and hence many who would have attached little weight to this hypothesis, if it had no more to support it than a mere rumour circulating in the fourth century respecting the

Allusions in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

closing part of the apostle's career, have been induced to embrace it because of its apparent harmony with the apostle's own statements in these epistles. But the very allusions which this hypothesis is in part assumed to account for, completely refute the notion that Paul spent the interval between his two imprisonments wholly or chiefly in the western parts of the Roman empire.

One of the strongest reasons, for instance, for regarding the second Epistle to Timothy as having been written during a second imprisonment of the apostle, is founded on the references to Paul's having shortly before been in Dalmatia, at Troas, at Corinth, and at Miletus (2 Tim. iv. 10, 13, 20), which cannot be made to harmonize with the record of his history antecedent to his imprisonment mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. It has also been suggested, with no small degree of probability, that the statement of the apostle to Timothy, 'thou knowest, that all they which are in Asia be turned away from me; of whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes' (2 Tim. i. 15), affords ground for believing that he had been apprehended the second time in that district of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital, and which in the New Testament is the country designated by the term *Asia*.[1] If, in addition, we regard the first Epistle to Timothy, and that to Titus, as also written during a second imprisonment, (though for this the evidence is not equally conclusive,) we must view the apostle as having, during the period of his

[1] See Birks' *Horæ Apostolicæ*, appended to the edition of Paley's *Horæ Paulinæ*, published by the Religious Tract Society, p. 307.

liberation, been first at Ephesus, and then in Macedonia (1 Tim. i. 3); to have visited Crete, and to have been on his way to Nicopolis, in Macedonia (Titus i. 5, iii. 12).

All these notices carry us to the eastern side of the Roman empire, whilst not one indication is given of the apostle's having been in any part further west than Rome itself. When, moreover, these notices are placed together, we shall probably be led to arrange the apostle's travels during this interval somewhat as follows:—Immediately after his liberation he set his face towards Asia, visited Crete, passed on to Ephesus; after remaining there some time, made a tour by way of Macedonia—returned to Ephesus, touching at Troas by the way—and whilst purposing another journey to Macedonia, where he intended to spend the winter at Nicopolis, he was apprehended a second time, probably at Miletus, to which place he would naturally resort if intending to take shipping for Macedonia.

Probable travels of Paul during his time of freedom.

If this present anything like a correct view of the apostle's occupations during this supposed interval, it must appear in the highest degree improbable that at any period of it he was so utterly out of the track here delineated, and so long absent from the district he is hereby shown to have perambulated, as he must have been had he made an apostolic journey through western Europe, and crossed over into Britain. Besides, if he made such tours as we have sketched, his time must have been fully occupied between Greece and Asia, so as to render a tour in Spain, Gaul, and Britain impossible within

the period, which, as we have seen, must be assigned to his term of liberty.

The only reply that can be given to this is, that we know not how rapidly the apostle travelled, and therefore cannot accurately determine how much he could accomplish within the space of four years. To this we answer: 1. That there is no reason to believe that, excepting in the case of royal messengers, the ancients ever travelled with breathless haste; 2. That a man travelling not merely to convey a message from one point to another, nor at all for the mere excitement of locomotion, but for the purpose of propagating opinions and visiting communities by whom these opinions had been embraced, and over whose affairs he had to exercise a friendly and an official superintendence, was very certain not to travel fast, or to hasten eagerly from point to point; 3. That part of Paul's journeyings, perhaps a considerable part, was performed by sea, which we know was amongst the ancients always a long and tedious process; 4. That Paul's usage during that portion of his life of which we have the details in the New Testament was to tarry for awhile, sometimes for a long while, even for years, at important or interesting points in his route; and if this was his usage in the vigorous and energetic period of his life, we may readily believe he would not exchange it for a less sedate method now that he was advanced in years, exhausted by toil, and emaciated by sufferings. The presumption we think is, therefore, very strong that Paul would spend this interval of reprieve in leisurely and solemnly visiting the churches with which his most

Argument from rate of travelling.

sacred associations and his tenderest affections were linked, that he might 'behold their order,' or 'set in order anything that was lacking,' ere he was called to his rest.

Most pleasant view of Paul's closing years.

To us, we confess, it is more pleasing to think of the venerable apostle as thus spending the closing years of his life than as hasting from place to place with a rapidity which would ill suit the gravity of age, or the estimate which he himself teaches us to form of those duties which as an apostle he was most solicitous to perform. 'That the apostle,' as has been justly remarked, 'combined astonishing energy and activity with his other extraordinary powers—that in the execution of his evangelical commission he shrank from no difficulty, danger, or labour—that he did visit a great number of places, are facts beyond dispute. But he was too prudent a teacher not to know the importance and necessity of abiding some time with his converts, in order to enforce, explain, and confirm the religion which he had been the means of teaching them. In proof of this assertion, we need only refer the reader to the Acts of the Apostles. We there find it recorded,[1] that Paul, upon one occasion, remained a year and six months at Corinth, "teaching the word of God among them;" that he stayed at Ephesus more than two years; that himself and Barnabas abode "long time" at Iconium, "speaking boldly in the Lord;" and that he repeated his visits to Corinth, Antioch, and many other places; according to his remark to

[1] Acts xviii. 11, xix. 10, xiv. 3, xv. 36.

Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." [1]

On the most careful consideration of the whole case, it thus appears, not only that the tradition which ascribes the introduction of the Gospel into Britain by Paul is destitute of all credible testimony in its support, but that such a fact is rendered, if not altogether impossible, at least to the last degree improbable, by what we know of the apostle's life anterior to his first imprisonment at Rome, and by what we have reason to believe was his course of action during the interval which is supposed to have elapsed between that and a second imprisonment, which terminated in his martyrdom. Pleasing, therefore, as on many grounds it would be to entertain such a belief, a regard to historical veracity compels us to reject it. By whomsoever founded, the ancient British Church can advance no tenable claim to the honour of having received its commencement from the preaching of the great 'Apostle of the Gentiles.'

Improbability of Paul's visit to Britain.

[1] Thackeray's *Researches*, vol. i. p. 76.

CHAPTER IV.

MONKISH FABLES.

σώφρονος δ' ἀπιστίας
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν χρῆσιμώτερον βροτοῖς.
EURIPIDES, *Helena*, 1617–18.

'Than prudent unbelief
Nought is of better service to mankind.'

THE maxim of the heathen poet just cited is one which the student of mediæval literature needs continually to keep in view. The writers of that age were men of free invention, and they addressed readers of large belief. It was an age eminently uncritical, especially in matters of history. If a story told well, the reader cared little whether it was true or not. If an apt fiction could fill up an awkward hiatus in an historical narrative, or give additional weight to an alleged claim, no writer thought himself bound to suppress it simply because it was not true. Hence the historical literature of that age is full of the most unfounded assertions, which are gravely adduced as indubitable verities, and of stories which, though the pure inventions of the writer, are often narrated with a sustained show of historical truth

Untrustworthiness of mediæval historic literature.

that might do credit to the genius of Defoe himself. On all our readings, therefore, of such writings, 'a prudent unbelief' must attend. It is not safe to admit anything simply because some grave and venerable historian solemnly asserts it, or ingeniously interweaves it with the tissue of his narrative.

The want of any certain information as to the means by which the Gospel was introduced into Britain left the field open for conjecture and invention. Nor was such a field likely to remain long unoccupied. To leave such a gap unfilled was abhorrent from all the notions and usages of monkish literature. No reader could be expected to go on with a book which should bear so sad a blot at its very commencement. No patriotic Englishman could brook the thought that, whilst other Christian countries were able to trace up the origin of their faith to some one of the apostles or their coadjutors, an impenetrable shadow should rest upon that part of his country's annals which ought to have afforded him ground for a similar boast. Such a want could not be endured. Ingenuity must supply what tradition had failed to preserve. If the real founder of Christianity in our island could not be discovered, it was the business of men who took it upon them to write books upon such subjects to make one. It was necessary to believe something on the subject, and as nobody knew the real fact, some one must furnish what would most pleasantly or advantageously supply its place.

Reasons for conjecture and fable.

Add to this, that the conflict between Celt and Saxon was carried from the camp to the cloister, and

led to controversies between the ecclesiastics of those nations, in which attention was continually called to the origin of their respective churches, whilst feelings were excited which made historical veracity appear of little value compared with party triumph and sectarian aggrandizement. Hence a flood of fictions as to the origin of Christianity in our island was poured forth. Few names of note belonging to the early age of the Church failed to find some one by whom their pretensions to the ancient honour were urged. Almost every writer offered a new invention. Different bodies had each its favourite hypothesis. Some of these hypotheses have even found able and learned defenders in comparatively recent times. In the present chapter, we shall hastily pass under review such of these traditions as cannot be altogether consigned to silent neglect, and yet are not deserving of any lengthened examination.

St. Peter claimed as the founder of the British Church.

After the establishment of the Romish Church in England, one does not wonder to find that there were some who boldly claimed the apostle Peter as the herald of salvation to its aborigines. But one does feel surprise that such a writer as Cardinal Baronius, even with all his Romish prejudices and preconceptions, should have ventured to adopt the hypothesis. It is one utterly without foundation, and utterly incredible. Not a single ancient writer breathes a syllable that even ingenuity can twist into the remote appearance of supporting it. Simeon Metaphrastes, it is true, says that Eusebius *somewhere* narrates that 'Peter spent twenty-three

years at Rome, in Britain, and in cities of the west.'[1] But Simeon Metaphrastes was a Constantinopolitan lawyer of the ninth or tenth century, whose individual testimony is of no worth in such a case, and whose alleged quotation from 'somewhere' in Eusebius we may, without any great breach of charity, believe was to be found *nowhere* but in the busy pleader's own imagination; more especially as Eusebius himself so distinctly tells us in his extant history, that Peter's sphere of apostolic action was in the east, and that it was to the Jews of the dispersion that he preached.[2]

Foundation of the British Church assigned to St. James.

Another of the apostolic band to whom the bringing of the Gospel to Britain has been assigned is James, the son of Zebedee, and brother of John the Evangelist. This legend appears in an unmistakably genuine Romanist form. 'James,' we are told, under date of the year 41 A.D., 'visited Gallia and Britannia, and the towns of Venetia, where he preached; after which he returned to Jerusalem, in order to consult, on some very grave matters, the blessed Virgin and Peter.'[3] This story carries the mark of falsehood on its front, and we are enabled, from the words of the New Testament, to show that

[1] *Comment. de Petro et Paulo ad diem 29 Junii;* cited by Ussher, p. 7. Compare Baronii *Annales*, i. 537.

[2] *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. iii. c. i.

[3] *Chronic. Lucii Dextri*, cited by Ussher, p. 5. It is by no means certain that the reference in this passage is to Britain at all, though Ussher cites it as if no doubt attached to the author's words. From the connexion in which it stands we are inclined to believe that it is rather to that part of France which was called Britannia Minor, now Bretagne, that the chronicle refers.

it cannot be true. According to the sacred writing, the martyrdom of Stephen was the occasion of a violent persecution, which ended in the dispersion, for the time, of the disciples of Christ who were at Jerusalem. Whilst, however, they 'went everywhere preaching the word,' the apostles remained at Jerusalem, and James among the rest. He was still at Jerusalem, when Paul went up to that city with Barnabas, as the bearers of the bounty of the churches among which they had been labouring to the brethren who were suffering in Jerusalem; and shortly after this he suffered martyrdom, by order of Herod Agrippa. It is evident from the whole tenor of the narrative, that he had never left Jerusalem, but continued labouring there until he was called to his rest.[1]

Simon Zelotes the founder of the British Church.

Simon Zelotes is another of the apostles who has been claimed as the founder of Christianity in Britain. Of this apostle we know almost nothing but the name; Scripture and history being both entirely silent as to his career. Nicephorus Callistus, a Greek monk of the fourteenth century, in his *Ecclesiastical History* mentions his having preached in Britain; and the same thing is stated in the *Synopsis of the Lives of the Prophets and Apostles*, ascribed to Dorotheus, a Tyrian bishop of the fourth century, with the addition that he suffered martyrdom in that country by crucifixion, a circumstance which the Greek Menology also states.

To a story resting on such evidence as this it

[1] Compare Acts viii. 1, xi. 30; Gal. ii. 9; Acts xii. 2.

would not be worth while to pay even a momentary attention, were it not that such a man as Dr. Cave has lent to it the sanction of his authority by virtually adopting it. 'Nor,' says he, in his life of this apostle, 'could the coldness of the climate benumb his zeal, or hinder him from shipping himself and the Christian doctrine over to the western islands, yea, even to Britain itself. Here he preached, and wrought many miracles; and after infinite troubles and difficulties which he underwent, (if we may believe our authors, whom though Baronius in this case makes no great account of, yet he never scruples freely to use their verdict and suffrage when they give in evidence to his purpose,) suffered martyrdom for the faith of Christ'; and then he cites, as his authorities, Nicephorus, Dorotheus, and the Menology.[1] Authority of Dr. Cave.

The sarcastic stricture which Dr. Cave, in this extract, lets fly at Baronius, is not, we believe, undeserved; but Dr. Cave, in uttering it, has exposed himself to a similar, and perhaps still severer retort. In this passage he appears as the vindicator of the credibility of Nicephorus and Dorotheus: let us hear what he himself, in another of his works,[2] says, of these very authorities: 'In his thirty-ninth year, he [Nicephorus] began to compose an ecclesiastical history out of Eusebius, Socrates, Sozomen, Theodoret, Evagrius, and other church writers. This he put together in a convenient enough order,

[1] *Lives of the Apostles*, vol. ii. p. 179. Stebbing's edition. London, 1834.

[2] *Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Hist. Liter.*, tom. i. p. 114. Appendix, p. 29.

and in a style not inelegant for that age, but he so vitiated it by everywhere introducing the rankest fables and trash, (*fabulis putidissimis et quisquiliis*,) that, to adopt the judgment of Casaubon, it is of no more value than a leaf of coltsfoot.' [1]

Of Dorotheus he writes very doubtfully, leaving the reader in great uncertainty as to the time, the place, and the events of his life, if not in some doubt as to whether he ever lived at all; but of the Synopsis, circulated under his name, Dr. Cave speaks without any obscurity or hesitation. 'That it is spurious,' says he, 'and to be packed off among the rankest fables, there is nobody who does not see.' And further on, whilst admitting that it contains some documents of value, he says that it is replete 'with old wives' fables, without any support from antiquity, and thrown together without any order.' Of these fables there can be very little doubt but that the visit of Simon to Britain, and his crucifixion there, is one; and it is surprising that Cave, having such an opinion of this work, should for a moment have accepted a story which rests upon no better authority than this. That there was no tradition to this effect in Britain itself is evident from the fact that Bede, in his *Martyrology*, adopts the Roman tradition that Simon suffered martyrdom in Persia.

The only other apostle whose name has been adduced in connexion with this subject is St. Paul, to the examination of whose claims we have already devoted a separate chapter.

Passing from apostles to apostolic men, the first

[1] A proverbial expression with the Latins for a mere trifle.

name we encounter is that of Aristobulus, the individual mentioned by Paul, in Rom. xvi. 10. Of him it is rumoured, in the traditions of the Romish and Greek martyrologies, that he was ordained by Paul to a bishopric in Britain, where, after much endurance, he succeeded in converting many to the faith, and establishing many churches throughout the country.

Traditions as to Aristobulus in Britain.

These traditions inform us also that this Aristobulus was the person named in the Gospels, Zebedee; that he was the husband of Mary Salome, and the father of James and John; that his daughter, Concordia, was the wife of Simon Peter, and that he was himself the brother of Barnabas, the companion of Paul.[1] This farrago of groundless assertion may serve to show with what a dauntless intrepidity these mediæval writers filled up the *lacunæ* which authentic history has left in the biographies of the early professors and teachers of Christianity. A witness who unhesitatingly tells us too much is one whose unsupported testimony we cannot receive for anything. 'All this,' says Dr. Henry, referring to the above-cited tradition, 'is so palpably absurd and legendary that it merits no serious confutation.[2]

One of the most famous of the legends circulated in England regarding the introduction of Christianity into that country, is that which ascribes it to Joseph of Arimathea. This legend had its origin among the monks of Glastonbury

Legend as to Joseph of Arimathea.

[1] *Menol. Græc.* 15th March. *Dorothei Synops.*, cited by Ussher, p. 9.

[2] *History of England*, vol. i. p. 131. 4to edition.

Abbey, and appears for the first time in William of Malmesbury's work on the Antiquities of Glastonbury. After him, it is repeated by most of our older historians, and in some cases with considerable additions, derived from the advancing fictions of the monks; for it is the characteristic of tradition—as of all muddy streams—to deposit successive layers of sediment with each succeeding age.

According to the simpler form of this tradition, Joseph accompanied the apostle Philip into the country of the Franks, whence he was enjoined by that apostle to pass over into Britain, with twelve disciples as his companions and coadjutors. He arrived with this company in the year 63 of the Christian era, and immediately commenced preaching to the natives. At first, no great success crowned the efforts of the missionaries; the king and his people were too much attached to their ancient superstitions to give heed to the new truths which they taught. But such was the respect which their mission and their modest deportment inspired, that the king permitted them to take possession of an island covered with wood and surrounded by marshes and brushwood, called by the natives Ynyswitrin. Afterwards, two other kings, moved by the sanctity of their lives, granted to each of them a portion of land, amounting on the whole to twelve hides. After a while, a vision of the angel Gabriel was vouchsafed to them, by whom they were commanded to erect a church to the honour of the Virgin in a particular spot which was pointed out to them. Prompt to obey this command, they erected a little chapel, the lower part of which was surrounded by a

wall of twisted twigs, 'a shapeless edifice indeed,' the historian observes, 'but adorned by manifold manifestations of the power of God.'

The additions made to this legend were designed to increase the marvellous character of the narrative, and, at the same time, to fill up more fully the details of the events. Thus we are told that the number of Joseph's attendants was originally six hundred men and women—that of these the majority, having broken a vow they had taken of abstinence till they should reach the land, were not permitted to cross—that the rest, to the number of a hundred and fifty, came over on the shirt (*camisia*) of Joseph—that, the remainder having repented of their incontinence, a ship was despatched for them, which had been built by king Solomon; that with them came over one Nacianus, a prince of the Medes, who had been formerly baptized by Joseph in the city of Saram, the king of which, Mordraius, also came with them—that they found Joseph a prisoner to a king of North Wales, whom Mordraius slew, and set Joseph free; that they then went and preached to the people under king Arviragus, who gave them the island Avalon, and along with two other pagan princes, Marius and Coilus, gave them twelve hides of land.

Other legends assign a miraculous origin to the church said to be built by Joseph, and assert that our Lord forbade any one to consecrate it, as He had consecrated both it and the surrounding grave-yard or cemetery Himself, in token of His pleasure that they had dedicated it to His mother—an assurance which he certified to St. David, to whom the intimation was vouchsafed by thrusting His finger through

his hand, 'which it seems,' says Stillingfleet, 'was to pass for the sign of a former consecration.' [The story again of the 'Glastonbury Thorn,' said to have sprung from Joseph's staff, is well known.] On these idle fictions we need not longer dwell; it would have been hardly worth while to notice them at all, did they not afford a specimen of the way in which legend is piled upon legend in the writings of the monks, till any vestige of actual fact which may have formed the nucleus of the mass is utterly lost amid the heaps of rubbish that are accumulated upon it.

Refutation by Bishop Stillingfleet.

It is remarkable that such a man as Archbishop Ussher should have been inclined to look with some degree of favour on so rank a fable as this of Joseph and his companion. It is perhaps no less remarkable that a writer of much superior logical powers to the Archbishop, Bishop Stillingfleet, should have thought it worthy of a serious, elaborate, and minute refutation. Having done so, however, he has for ever banished this legend beyond the utmost pale of credibility. A few remarks on the subject will, we think, amply suffice to satisfy our readers that even in its simplest form this story is incredible.

1. There is no authority for it antecedent to the Norman invasion; not one of the ancient British or Saxon writers mentions it, if we except some doubtful remains ascribed to persons connected with Glastonbury itself, and whose testimony, even if genuine, is too suspicious to be of any value. After the Norman invasion, fables were invented so freely by the monks that they did not require even the basis of a tradition to work upon.

2. Though William of Malmesbury says that the story he gives was drawn by him from a charter of St. Patrick, and other ancient writings, and though other charters have been produced in order to prove the extreme antiquity of Glastonbury as a religious institution, there can be no doubt that all of these are forgeries;[1] and indeed most of them, especially that of St. Patrick, which is printed in the Monasticon,[2] bear indubitable marks of their falsity in themselves, as Stillingfleet has fully shown.

3. William of Malmesbury, in his English Chronicle, gives a passing reference to this legend in commencing his account of Glastonbury; but not only is this account in many particulars different from that given by him in his other work, from which we have already quoted, but the authority which he attaches to it appears greatly inferior. He speaks, indeed, 'of documents of no small credit,' as testifying that 'no other hands than those of the disciples of Christ erected the church of Glastonbury'; but he goes on to plead for this as probable only on the ground that '*if* Philip the apostle preached to the Gauls, as Freculphus relates in the fourth chapter of his second book, it *may* be believed that he also planted the word on this side of the Channel also.'

[1] 'As to these counterfeit charters, the opinion of Papebrochius seems most probable to me—that they were for the most part framed in the eleventh century, when there was ignorance enough to make them pass, and occasion enough given to the monks to frame them for their own security against the encroachments of others on their lands, and the jurisdiction of bishops over their monasteries.'—*Stillingfleet*, p. 23.

[2] Vol. i. p. 11.

It is evident from this, that notwithstanding his 'documents of no small credit,' the historian felt himself upon anything but stable ground in regard to this matter; and that he regarded the whole story as very doubtful, he fairly tells his readers in the next sentence: 'But that I may not seem to balk the reputation of my readers in vain imaginations, *leaving all doubtful matter I shall proceed to the relation of substantial truth.*'[1] A story, of which the oldest narrator of it, and chief witness for it, speaks thus doubtingly, it would be folly in us to receive with any credit.

4. This story is utterly incompatible with all the best ascertained facts relating to the history of the parties mentioned, to the usages of the age, and to the state of South Britain at that time. It is incompatible with the authentic tradition of the church as preserved by Eusebius, Chrysostom, and others, that the apostle Philip's sphere of labour was in Phrygia, and that he died and was buried at Hierapolis.[2] It is incompatible with the well-known fact, that there were no hermit bands among the primitive Christians, nor for more than two centuries after

[1] *English Chronicle*, book i. c. 2. Giles's translation, p. 21.

[2] 'In Asia,' says Polycrates, as quoted by Eusebius, 'slumber many great luminaries, who shall arise in the day of the coming of the Lord, when He shall come with glory in the heavens and shall raise all His saints. Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis with two of his daughters, who lived to old age virgins,' etc. This testimony is of great authority; it comes from one who was bishop of Ephesus, and wrote in the end of the second century. Euseb., *H. E.*, lib. iii. c. xxxi.; V. c. xxiv. Compare Chrysostom, Dorotheus Tyr., Hippolytus Portuensis, *De 12 App.*; Isidor. Hispan., *De vita et obitu Sanctorum*, 72.

the apostolic age.[1] It is incompatible with the fact, that not only did the only British king of the name of Arviragus, known to have reigned in any part of Britain, live at a later period than that alleged for the arrival of Joseph and his companions, but no such king *could* have been then reigning in the district in which Glastonbury is, because before this it had been reduced to the condition of a Roman province. And, in fine, the part of this story which represents the church as built by command of the archangel Gabriel, as dedicated to the virgin Mary, and as consecrated by our Lord Himself, who, in so strange a manner, appeared to announce this to St. David, savours too strongly of monkish superstition to belong to the early age to which the occurrence is ascribed. The latter part is manifestly the contrivance of some mediæval monk, for it refers to the consecration of a grave-yard surrounding the church, in forgetfulness of the fact, that in that age, and for long afterwards, the cemeteries were detached from the churches and placed without the walls of towns.[2]

These reasons are sufficient to throw doubt upon this story, even were it better supported by evidence than it is; in the total absence of all evidence worthy of the name, they

Glastonbury.

[1] See Neander's *Church History*, vol. i. p. 373; vol. iii. p. 305. Waddington's *Church History*, vol. ii. p. 199.

[2] Spelman, *Concil.*, p. 11, quoted by Stillingfleet, p. 29. This custom continued during the Heptarchy. 'The city,' says king Ethelbert, in one of his charters referring to this subject 'is for the living, and not for the dead.' Would that the wisdom of our ancestors had in this instance descended to their posterity!

conclusively stamp the character of a fiction upon it. In the decision of Stillingfleet, that it was an invention of the monks of Glastonbury, to serve their interests by advancing the reputation of their monastery, there are few impartial inquirers who will not now concur. Whether some element of fact may not lie at the basis of the fiction, it is impossible now to ascertain with anything beyond a merely conjectural probability. It is possible, however, that as Glastonbury was held in great reverence amongst the early British Christians, and was undoubtedly, from a very remote period, the site of a Christian church, it *may* have been the locality in which some wandering missionary of the cross first set up his banner in the name of the Lord, and preached Christ to the surrounding barbarians. All attempts, however, to elicit with certainty any historical truth out of a legend or myth are hopeless—much more so than even that proverbial acme of difficulty, the attempt to find a needle in a bundle of hay; for the needle, if one should lay hold of it, can at once be pronounced a needle, and severed from the hay; whereas no criterion exists by which we can certainly distinguish the particle of truth hidden in a myth from the mass of fiction by which it is surrounded.

Legend of Timotheus and Pudentiana.

The only other of these lesser legends to which we shall advert is one which has acquired a certain adventitious interest from recent occurrences in this country. It is that of Timotheus, the brother of St. Pudentiana.

In one of the oldest streets of Rome, the Strada

Urbana, there stands a very ancient church, dedicated to St. Pudentiana, whose portrait adorns the principal altar. Many are the wonders which, according to Romanist belief, this church contains, and among others, the very altar at which St. Peter celebrated mass! and in certain pits the blood of not fewer than three thousand martyrs, who are buried under the church, and over whose precious blood the patroness saint watches!

Of this lady the story runs thus:—In the reign of Claudius Cæsar there lived in Rome, on the very spot where this church now stands, a wealthy senator, named Pudens, who had two sons, Novatus and Timotheus; and two daughters, Praxes and Pudentiana (or Portentiana). To this man's house the apostle Peter came in the year of our Lord 44, where he was hospitably received, and where he remained for five or six years. Through his means, not only was the family of Pudens,[1] including his mother, Priscilla, and his wife, Sabinella, converted to Christ, but others also, so that a church was formed in his house. Exercising that power which belonged to him as an apostle, St. Peter sent persons from this church into different parts of the world to preach the Gospel. Among others, he sent Timotheus,

[1] According to Romish tradition, it was from Pudens that Peter got the chair which is kept concealed in the Vatican as one of its choicest treasures. Lady Morgan published to the world the detection of this cheat made by the French *sarans* when Rome was in the hands of Napoleon, for which she was scolded in a very uncourteous style by Cardinal Wiseman. Lady Morgan, however, ably stood her ground, whilst her assailant was proved to have imposed upon the public as his own the production of another, full of the grossest blunders. See Rich's *Legend of St. Peter's Chair.*

the son of his host, into Britain, where, it is said, he converted a king Lucius and all his people.

All this is of course pure fiction, but it has served to connect the family of Pudens with Britain, and to make St. Pudentiana a sort of favourite with British ecclesiastics of the Romish faith. There is some confusion, also, in this legend in the ascription to the apostolic age of the conversion of king Lucius. His story belongs to a later age, and is one of so much importance, that we must examine it somewhat more fully than we have done those just passed under review.

CHAPTER V.

STORY OF KING LUCIUS.

Αλλο μηδὲν πλὴν σκιάν.
PHILEMON. AP. STOBÆUM.

'Dream of a dream and shadow of a shade.'
YOUNG.

Of all our early historians, the most valuable in every respect is the Venerable Bede. It is on his testimony that the story we are now about to examine principally rests, and it is on this account, as well as on account of the acceptance it has found with such men as Ussher and Stillingfleet, that we think it worthy of a more detailed investigation than any of those at which we have glanced in the preceding chapter.[1]

The story of king Lucius, as given by Bede, is as follows: 'In the year from the incarnation of the Lord 156, Marcus Antoninus Verus, the fourteenth from Augustus, obtained the empire along with his brother Commodus;

Bede's story of King Lucius.

[1] Mr. Hallam deemed this story deserving of his careful scrutiny, and gave the results of his inquiry in the *Archæologia*, vol. iii. pp. 308–325. To this masterly paper we beg to express once for all our obligations in the preparation of this chapter. See also Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, i. 25.

in whose times, whilst Eleutherius, a holy man, was supreme pontiff of the Roman Church, Lucius, king of Britain, sent a letter to him beseeching him that through his mandate he might become a Christian. Not long after, he obtained his pious wish; and the faith thus received, the British retained in peace and quietness, inviolate and entire, even to the time of Diocletian.' [1]

Story by Nennius.

Nennius, who probably derived his information from some other source than that of Bede, tells the story thus: 'After the birth of Christ, one hundred and sixty-seven years, king Lucius, with all the chiefs of the British people, received baptism in consequence of a legation sent by the Roman emperors and the pope Evaristus.' [2]

Account by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Geoffrey of Monmouth, who excels all our earlier historians in his ability to dress off a story with the ornaments of romance, gives a much more lengthened account of this transaction. According to him, Lucius, who was the great-grandson of Arviragus, hearing of the miracles performed everywhere by the disciples of Christ, sent a petition to the pope imploring Christian instruction; in reply to which, the pope sent him two most religious instructors, Fagan and Duvan, who, after they had preached to him concerning the incarnation of the Word of God, administered baptism to him, and made him a proselyte to the Christian faith. His example was immediately followed by people from all countries, and such was the success of the missionaries that they speedily

[1] *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. i. c. iv.
[2] *History of the Britons* (9th cent.), § xxi.

extinguished paganism all over the island, seized the heathen temples, dedicated them to the service of God, and filled them with congregations of Christians. They found eight and twenty heathen priests and three archpriests in the island; them they converted and made bishops and archbishops, placing the seats of the latter at London, York, and 'the city of the Legions.' After this they returned to Rome, where all they had done was confirmed by the pope, and they were sent back to Britain, accompanied by many others, to complete the work they had so auspiciously begun.[1]

Welsh traditions of Lucius.

Among the Welsh traditions, the same story appears in a somewhat different form. They make Lucius, or, as they call him, Lleurwg, to be the great-grandson of the famous Caradoc, or Caractacus, and place his territory in that part of Siluria afterwards known by the joint names of Gwent and Morganwg.[2] In the *Liber Landavensis*, (7th cent.) p. 65, the following version of the story appears: 'In the year of our Lord 156, Lucius, king of the Britons, sent his ambassadors, namely, Elvan and Medwin, to Eleutherius, twelfth pope of the apostolic see, imploring, according to his (Lucius's) directions, that he might be made a Christian, which he obtained. For,

[1] Geoffrey's *British History*, book iv. c. xix., xx. To Lucius Geoffrey ascribes the founding of St. Peter's church at Westminster, the church in Dover Castle, St. Martin's at Canterbury, and many other churches. He was buried, according to this historian, with great pomp in the cathedral church at Gloucester in the year 156.

[2] Thackeray, vol. i. p. 137.

thinking it good that a nation which, from the time of the first inhabitant of the region, Brute, has been heathen, so ardently hastened to embrace the faith of Christ, by the advice of the seniors of the Roman city, he (the pope) thought fit that the said ambassadors should be baptized, and having caused them to be instructed in the Christian faith, he ordained Elvan a bishop, and Medwin a doctor. And these preachers, eloquent and learned in the Holy Scriptures, returned to Lucius into Britain, through whose preaching Lucius and the chiefs of all Britain were baptized; and according to the command of pope Eleutherius, he established the ecclesiastical hierarchy, caused bishops to be ordained, and taught the rules of a good life.'[1]

Of these accounts, the greater part resolve themselves into that of Bede, of which they are merely repetitions, more or less dressed up. As the story in all probability had not a Saxon but a Cymric origin, the testimony of the Welsh authorities would be chiefly deserving of respect, were it not that the lateness of their date renders it impossible to confide in the authenticity of their statements. The story as told in the *Liber Landavensis* is the least disfigured by chronological and historical incongruities; but as that work is comparatively modern, it may be suspected that the author purposely framed his account so as to avoid those glaring blunders which appear on the very surface of those of earlier writers.

The account of Geoffrey of Monmouth may be

[1] Quoted by Hallam.

passed over without notice, as only the dressed-up version of what Nennius and Bede state more simply and briefly. The account of the former of these writers is full of mistakes. He places the conversion of Lucius in the year 164, or, according to some of the manuscripts of his history, 167, and yet he makes it synchronize with the alleged pontificate of Evaristus, who died in 109. He makes the reigning emperors of Rome favourable to the Christian religion and anxious for its propagation, whereas, at the time he mentions, the occupants of the imperial throne were bitter enemies of the Christian cause, and systematic persecutors of its adherents.[1] And with a ridiculous disregard to all authentic history, he makes Lucius king of Britain, and surrounds him by subordinate British princes, at a time when Britain was a Roman province, and could have no independent sovereign. Abstracting these manifest blunders from his narrative, the only fact that remains is, that a person named Lucius received baptism some time in the second century, but whether at the beginning or end of it is uncertain.

Mistakes in the accounts by Nennius and Bede.

In the narrative of Bede occur mistakes of a similar kind. He misnames the Roman emperors, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and his colleague and adopted brother Lucius Verus; which, however, may be merely a clerical error, and therefore of no

[1] Of Marcus Antoninus, who reigned from A.D. 161 to 180, Gibbon says, that 'during the whole course of his reign he despised the Christians as a philosopher, and punished them as a sovereign.'—*Decline and Fall*, vol. ii. p. 448. Milman's edit. See also Waddington's *Church History*, vol. i. p. 117.

weight.[1] But his chronology is in inextricable confusion. He names the year 156 as the date of the conversion of Lucius; but at this date Marcus Antoninus was not emperor, nor was Eleutherius at that time bishop of Rome. In the recapitulatory chronicle appended to his history, Bede alters the date to 167, which partly relieves his statement, but not entirely; for though it brings the date assigned to the conversion of Lucius within the reign of Marcus Antoninus, it still makes that event occur ten years before Eleutherius became bishop.

These may be regarded, however, as minor difficulties, compared with that which arises from his making Lucius sustain the kingly dignity in Britain at a time when that island was, as far as the Firth of Forth, if not farther, reduced into the condition of a Roman province.[2] Bede's statement is not in this respect so absurdly wrong as that of Nennius, but still it is impossible to reconcile it with historical truth. Was Lucius an independent prince reigning beyond the limits of Roman conquest? In that case he must have presided either over some of the wild tribes of Caledonia, north of the wall of Antoninus, or over some of the yet unsubdued portions of Wales.

Bede's statement impossible to reconcile with history.

But in either case could he, in any proper sense, be called king of Britain? or is it at all credible that any independent prince in such circumstances,

[1] It is one, moreover, for which Bede cannot be held primarily responsible, as he has quoted this part of his statement verbatim from Osorius.—Lib. vii. c. xv.

[2] Henry's *History of Great Britain*, vol. i. p. 55.

exposed to the continual encroachments of the Roman invaders, maintaining with difficulty his position against them, and involved in incessant and bitter strife with their advanced legions, would be at leisure to occupy himself with a new religion —would be able to despatch messengers to a great distance on such an errand—or, if he had been, would feel the least inclination to send such messengers to Rome,—of all places to him the most odious, as the capital of the enemy by whom he had been driven into straits, and with whom he was waging a daily internecine war? Shall we, then, adopt the hypothesis that Lucius was a prince tributary to the Romans, and as such permitted by them to exercise some degree of authority in some part of Britain under their sway? In this case, the description of Bede must be shorn of its grandiloquence, and the king of Britain must sink down to a very much humbler rank. But even thus the story is one which it is difficult to receive.

Reasons for discrediting the legend of Lucius.

In the *first* place—If such an event ever occurred as a mission from a prince of Britain to Rome, for the purpose of imploring that he and his people might be taught Christianity, it seems very strange that no hint of it should appear in Eusebius, or any of the early church writers. It cannot be said that they were indifferent to such occurrences, or that they were careless about narrating them. We know the contrary to have been the case, especially with Eusebius; and as it is hardly possible that *no* recollection of such an event, had it ever occurred, should linger at Rome, or, if it had, should never have come to the

knowledge of so diligent an inquirer as Eusebius, who was on the spot for the very purpose of collecting information on such points, it must be admitted that his silence throws great suspicion on the whole story.

Secondly.—Another suspicious circumstance of the same kind is the entire silence of the oldest of our ecclesiastical historians, Gildas. Bede in most cases follows Gildas in his accounts of British affairs previous to the Saxon invasion; but in this instance he deserts him, and not only narrates a very remarkable occurrence of which no notice whatever is taken by Gildas, but assigns an origin to British Christianity altogether irreconcilable with that assigned by Gildas. The force of this objection to Bede's statement is admitted by bishop Stillingfleet to be great. 'If a negative argument,' says he, 'will hold anywhere, it is where a person hath as much reason to know as any that follow him, and as great occasion to discover what he knows; both which will hold in the case of Gildas, compared with Bede or later writers.' [1]

Silence of Gildas.

Thirdly.—We have no means of ascertaining from what source Bede had his information. The alleged treatise of Elvan on the Origin of the British Church, which Bale says he wrote on his return from Rome, is a mere fiction. Probably neither he nor Nennius had any other authority than some tradition of the British ecclesiastics, imperfectly understood by them, and reported only in such a form as suited their own views.

Sources of Bede's information.

[1] *Antiquities*, p. 67.

Fourthly.—The bearing of such a story upon the question of the independence of the ancient British Church subjects it to great suspicion. The ecclesiastics of that Church held themselves free of papal control; they maintained that they owed nothing to the Church of Rome; and they in consequence refused submission to the jurisdiction of the Saxon clergy, as established in Britain by papal appointment. In the time of Bede, this controversy was raging, and very probably the account he gives was the one alone received as genuine by the Saxon clergy; for in that controversy it manifestly served their purpose to represent the ancient British clergy as having derived their orders directly from Rome. This will account very well, alike for the silence of Gildas, the narrative of Bede, and the expanded story of Geoffrey of Monmouth. The first, if he knew anything at all of the story, would repudiate it as a fiction invented by a hostile party to further their own interests; the second would, as belonging to that party, for that very reason embrace it; and the third, living at a time when the Romanist influence had triumphed, and the English clergy were as anxious to forget as their predecessors had been to avow the non-Roman origin of their Church, eagerly accepted the story, and sent it forth afresh with new embellishments, as if such had always been the tradition and the belief of the ancient British Church.

Independence of ancient British Church.

Fifthly.—In whatever part of Britain the dominions of Lucius may be supposed to have lain, the power ascribed to him seems hardly compatible

with the jealousy of the Romans in regard to the influence of native princes in the places they had conquered. It must be admitted that they sometimes allowed such to retain a certain amount of royal power, as in the case of the Herodian family in Judæa; and it is known that even in Britain they permitted Cogidunus, because of his great fidelity to their interests, to retain possession of certain cities, according to an established usage of theirs, by which, as Tacitus tells us, they sought to secure even kings as instruments of servitude.[1]

Power of Lucius.

But if Lucius was such an one, how came he to have such power of independent action as to send ambassadors to Rome for an object which the Roman emperors at that time must have disapproved of? Whence came his power to change the religion of his people, to build churches, and to parcel out his territory into bishoprics, for the establishment and propagation of a religion which his imperial masters had begun systematically to persecute?

Besides, to have done what he is alleged to have done, his influence over the British subject to him must have been very great; and in order to secure this he must have been their *hereditary* chief, for among the Celtic tribes no such influence could have been acquired by one who had been merely placed over them by the power of the Roman invaders, irrespective of any claim of birthright.

All who have espoused the tradition seem tacitly to admit this, and hence the different genealogies

[1] *Vit. Agric.*, c. xiv.

of Lucius, some of which have been already given, and all of which have for their object to connect him with some known royal British stock. Bishop Stillingfleet's conjecture, that he was a descendant of Cogidunus, is the most plausible. But all such attempts to settle his lineage are purely conjectural; and they have, besides, this fatality attaching to them, that the more probable they seem, the more do they go to disprove the story they are intended to support: for the more certain the descent of Lucius from one of the old British princes, the more improbable does it become that the Romans would intrust to him kingly power over his hereditary subjects, especially if, as in the case of Cogidunus, they had permitted a certain amount of that to one of his ancestors. Their policy ever was to break to pieces those hereditary associations which might endanger the quiet continuance of their dominion; and hence they never allowed the son of any of the tributary kings to succeed his father, unless where, as in the case of the Herodian family, they could play off one member of the family against another, so as the better to control the whole. If it be suggested that such *might* be the case with the posterity of Cogidunus, it is replied that we are not entitled, in an inquiry like this, to make any such gratuitous assumption, and that had such been the case it is probable that Lucius, like the descendants of Herod, would have been too wicked a man to desire to make his people Christian, and too unpopular among them, as an hereditary instrument of their servitude, to succeed in such a desire, even had he entertained it.

Lineage of Lucius.

Finally.—On the evidence of certain coins, alleged to bear the image of a king on them, with a cross, and the letters L V C, though somewhat indistinct, it is said to be *proved* that there was such a person in Britain as Lucius, who was a king and a Christian.[1] The first to advance this evidence was Archbishop Ussher. His words are these: 'Nor must I omit to mention that two very ancient coins have been found in England, (one of silver, possessed by Mr. Joseph Holland; the other of gold, which I myself have seen in the collection of Sir Robert Cotton,) marked with the image of some Christian king, (as appears from the sign of the cross appended,) and with rather obscure letters, which seem to denote L V C.'[2] From this it will be perceived that Ussher saw only one of these coins, the golden one; of the other he had merely *heard*, and we know not with certainty that it bore any great resemblance to the one he examined; it may be even doubted if it ever existed, as this brief and unsatisfactory notice of it is the only one extant.

So-called coins of Lucius.

The other is well known; it is engraved in Speed's *History of Great Britain*, and in the folio edition of Camden's *Britannia*, and is now in the British Museum. Mr. Hallam, who examined it carefully, says that it 'has a head surrounded by something like a string of pearls, as some have thought, or a chain, as seems more probable, and with two cross lines on the obverse, and on the reverse a horse with a human head, and part of a figure behind it. On each side of this figure is a scrawl, one like the letter

[1] Stillingfleet, p. 60.
[2] *De Primordiis Eccl. Brit.*, pp. 39, 40.

L, the other a little like a C; there is no appearance of a V, and probably these scrawls were not meant for alphabetic characters at all.' After commending the accuracy of the delineations in Speed and Camden, Mr. Hallam adds: 'No one, I should conceive, looking at the coin itself any more than at the delineation, would fancy with Ussher that it contains the letters L V C, even "*literis obscurioribus.*"'[1] As to the alleged cross, there is none, unless the mere intersection of two straight lines is to be taken as such. Nor is there anything to prove it a *British* coin; it seems rather to belong to Gaul.

Thus this evidence, which was to prove so much, melts away before inquiry. This coin does not prove the existence of a *king* called *Lucius*, for it has neither a royal blazon nor any clear traces of any of the letters of that name. It does not prove anything as to the *Christianity* of the person whose head is figured, for the supposed cross is no cross, and the human-headed horse has little that bespeaks Christian tastes and usages. It does not, in fine, prove anything as to *Britain*, for the presumption is, that it is not British at all, but Gaulish. How little are even men of the greatest learning and parts to be implicitly trusted in matters of this sort! What the learned Ussher asserted on the testimony of his own eyesight, and the logical Stillingfleet admitted as decisive of an historical question, may at once be seen by any one who will take the trouble of examining Speed's engraving, or can find access to the numismatic treasures of the British Museum, to be a mere delusion, that disappears as it is investigated,—

[1] *Archæol.*, vol. xxxiii. pp. 313, 314.

'And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leaves not a wreck behind.'

On the grounds which we have thus stated, it seems impossible to accept the legend of king Lucius even in the simplest form as historical. Must we, then, reject it as *utterly* without foundation? or may there not be some particle of fact lying at the root of this large growth of fable? Most inquirers incline to the latter side of the alternative; though others adopt the former, among whom may be classed Mr. Hallam, who thinks that the story was *invented* by some British monk jealous of the pretensions of the Saxon Church, and anxious to show, not only that there was an earlier Church in Britain, but that that Church had from the beginning the boasted connection with the great patriarchate of the west.[1]

Legend of Lucius not historical.

There is very probably truth in this; but for ourselves we must confess that we are unwilling to reject as a pure and unmixed fiction a story of such antiquity, and which was so widely diffused through both the Saxon and the Celtic branches of the Church in Britain. But *what* of truth there is in it must be matter of mere conjecture, and hence, as might have been expected, different writers have hit upon different solutions of the problem. Mosheim has advanced the notion that Lucius was not a Briton at all, but some Roman of distinction, located for a season in Britain, and who, having himself embraced Christianity, used active and successful endeavours to dis-

Opinion of Mosheim about Lucius.

[1] *Lib. cit.*, p. 315.

seminate it among the natives, whose superstition he deplored.[1]

In this there is nothing impossible, and it might account for the tradition that it was from Rome that the teachers introduced by Lucius came; but the ground on which Mosheim bases his conjecture,—that Lucius, namely, is a Latin, and not a British name,—is of no weight. On the same ground it might be argued, that Caractacus, Cunobelinus, Arviragus, and Cæsar's ally and agent, Commius, were Romans, as all these are names conformed to the Latin paradigm. Nothing was more common than for the Romans to Latinize the names both of the nations and of individuals whom they encountered in their career of conquest; taking the name they found used by the parties themselves, and adapting it both to the grammatical forms of their own language, and to their own convenience in pronunciation; and this fashion continued with all who wrote their language even till a comparatively late period. Lucius, therefore, may be only a Latinized form of some British name which the Saxon monks writing in Latin so transformed; or, as in the Welsh version of this story, the name appears in a genuine British form, that of Lleurwg, which signifies *luminary*, the Saxon writers may have intended to *translate* this by Lucius, which they may have regarded as derived from *lux*, *lucis*, 'light,' and as having therefore much the same meaning as Lleurwg.

The Rev. Rice Rees, in his *Essay on Welsh Saints*,

[1] *Comment. de rebus Christianorum*, etc., p. 215.

informs us (p. 82), that in the Welsh Triads a tradition is recorded to the effect 'that Lleufer Mawr, a British chieftain, though subject to Rome, erected a church at Llandaff, which was the first in the island of Britain.' This appears to us to suggest by much the most probable origin of the story of Lucius. It is quite possible that at a very early period some petty British prince, having embraced Christianity, may have built a church in the locality specified, and been instrumental in greatly diffusing the knowledge of Christianity through the surrounding country. Such a thing would be sure to survive in the popular traditions, and as the tradition cited by Mr. Rees is as old as the seventh century, it may be taken as no bad authority in such a matter.

Tradition as to Lleufer Mawr.

As the tradition spread and passed from generation to generation, it would suffer the usual fate of such forms of historical record; by exaggerations, by additions, by alterations, it would gradually assume a more marvellous and mythical character, and one less reconcilable with historical fact. In this way the legend very probably grew up which Bede narrates. Lleurwg, the chieftain of some small clan or sept, became Lucius, the king of Britain; his building of a church was transformed into his sending a request to the bishop of Rome for religious instructors; and his success in leading those around him to renounce idolatry and embrace Christianity was expanded into a conversion of all the princes and tribes of Britain. Succeeding ages still went on adding and altering, until the tradition came forth in full-blown maturity in the mendacious

pages of the fertile Geoffrey of Monmouth. We may accept it as the dim recollection of an interesting fact in the early progress of Christianity in our land; but it affords us no information whatever, either as to the time when, or the channel through which, that blessed faith first reached our shores.

CHAPTER VI.

CONJECTURES AND PROBABILITIES.

'I seek upon the heights of time the source
Of a holy river, on whose banks are found
Sweet pastoral flowers and laurels that have crowned
Full oft the unworthy brow of lawless force:
Where, for delight of him who tracks its course,
Immortal amaranth and palms abound.'

WORDSWORTH.

THE preceding investigation has landed us in the conclusion that no certain record remains of the sources whence the inhabitants of southern Britain received originally the message of the Gospel. So utter is the absence of all authentic information on the subject, that one might be almost tempted to fancy that, like the seeds from which gradually spread those vast primeval forests amid which our Celtic ancestors found shelter when the Roman invader first lighted on their shores, 'the incorruptible seed of the word' had been borne across by some invisible means, and had fallen into some good soil, prepared to receive it by the hand of the Divine Husbandman, where it had silently thriven and grown.

No certain information of introduction of Gospel into Britain.

And yet nothing can be more certain than that

no instrumentality was employed in this case beyond that of man. God, who can call into operation any of the powers, whether visible or invisible, whether material or spiritual, by which superhuman acts are accomplished, and make them fulfil His pleasure, is pleased, in regard to the propagation of the Gospel, to employ only the instrumentality of man. Having so constituted us that we have a strong desire, so soon as we have learned any new truth, or discovered any new law, to communicate it to others; and having given us a power of influencing others by the personal communication to them of the feelings, hopes, and motives by which we are ourselves affected, He has been graciously pleased, in subordination to the influences of the Holy Spirit, to make use of this adaptation for the purpose of disseminating His truth through the world.

Human instrumentality in founding the early Church.

Those to whom this was first conveyed were sent forth with a command to proclaim it 'to every creature'; and the same obligation still rests upon all by whom it is embraced. As they 'have freely received,' they are 'freely to give.' As the word came to them without any merit of their own, they are to let it 'sound out from them to all who are around,' as an acknowledgment of the obligation under which the reception of it has laid them. Having themselves eaten of the bread of life, they are forthwith to carry it to those who, for want of it, are perishing. From this duty nothing can exempt them, and whenever their hearts are rightly affected by a sense of their own mercies, they will feel no desire whatever for any such exemption. Their

duty will be their privilege—their work their glory and delight. Constrained by the love of Christ, bound by a strong sense of grateful obligation to the grace of God; filled with compassion for the miserable estate of man, when destitute of the knowledge of Christ; and animated by a glowing sense of the power of the Gospel to sanctify and bless all who accept it, they will hasten to obey the summons which calls them to the field; and whether it be for work or for warfare, will hold themselves ready to occupy the post to which their Master shall see fit to appoint them.

In the early ages of Christianity, these convictions and feelings operated with vivid intensity in the bosoms of the believers. The early Church was pre-eminently missionary. To the apostles and their immediate adherents the fact presented itself with overwhelming force, that 'the whole world was lying in the wicked one,' and that to them were intrusted the only means by which any could be rescued from that dire embrace. It seemed to them as if the old serpent had girdled the globe in his venomous embrace, intent on holding fast the prey which he had seized; and they felt that, as the followers of Him who had come to 'bruise the serpent's head,' it belonged to them, as the one great object of their activity, to use the means which He had appointed in order to compel the arch-enemy to release his grasp, and let his miserable captives go free. Hence they devoted themselves to the work of evangelizing those with whom they came in contact; and after God, in His providence, had taught them that not at home

Missionary spirit of the early Church.

merely, but as wanderers to and fro in many and far distant countries, they were to be witnesses for Christ, they cheerfully went forth, bearing their precious seed with them, to scatter it wherever they could reach.

This spirit pervaded the Church in the apostolic age, and long survived, even after much of the simplicity and purity of apostolic times had been lost. Among much that is painful and humiliating in the progressive history of the Church, the undying fervour of missionary zeal which, for many centuries, she more or less exhibited, forms one bright and redeeming feature. Until corrupted by worldly honour and emolument, she regarded her vocation as lying in a holy warfare for God and Christ. Pledged to God in baptism, each believer was taught to regard himself as having then taken the military oath by which he bound himself, as the Roman legionaries were wont to do when they enrolled themselves under the banner of the state, at no time, either for fear or favour, to desert the standard of his leader. 'We were called,' exclaims Tertullian,[1] 'to be soldiers of the living God from the moment that we responded to the baptismal words.' Accordingly, no toils, privations, or dangers could turn them from their benevolent purpose. They had learned to 'endure hardness, as good soldiers of Christ;' and, obedient to His word, they 'went everywhere preaching the Gospel.'

Survival of missionary spirit.

The prevalence of such a spirit in the primitive

[1] *Ad Martyr.*, c. iii.

Church is sufficient to account for the extensive spread of Christianity in the early period of its promulgation; an untiring activity was everywhere at work for this end, and each new success only called into operation fresh energies for the work. With this before us, we need not be puzzled to account for the early introduction of the Gospel into Britain. The notices already furnished in an earlier chapter of the direct and regular intercourse between Britain and the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, will help us to conjecture a very natural and highly probable channel by which the Gospel might be brought at an early period to these lands.

Results of missionary spirit.

Where commerce can penetrate, Christianity may follow; and what is to forbid our supposing that some of the early converts to Christianity in Asia Minor or Greece may have availed themselves of the opportunity, afforded by the visit of the merchantmen of their native country to Britain, to cross over to these distant and no doubt much-talked-of islands of the sea, with the message of the Gospel? Or, if this be thought too violent a supposition—though to us, considering the zeal of the early Christians on the one hand, and the amount of intercourse between Britain and the countries named on the other, the supposition appears probable—it is open to us to suppose that, as Gaul had received the Gospel from the east at a very early period, some converts from that country may have crossed over to Britain with the tidings of salvation. This no one can suppose improbable; it is rather what the natural tendency of Christianity to propagate itself,

through the pious zeal of its followers, would lead us to expect *must* have happened, had Gaul preceded Britain in the possession of the inestimable boon.

Christianity introduced into Britain from the East.

This hypothesis of an origin of the primitive British Church either directly or mediately from the East has been adopted by many of the best authorities in matters of historical inquiry; among the rest by Neander. After briefly disposing of the legend of Lucius, this distinguished historian proceeds to say: 'But the peculiarity of the later British Church is evidence against its origin from Rome; for in many ritual matters [of human device, and therefore not such as two independent bodies were likely to adopt from their own study of the sacred Scriptures] it departed from the usage of the Romish Church, and agreed much more nearly with the churches of Asia Minor. It withstood for a long time the authority of the Romish papacy. This circumstance would seem to indicate that the Britons had received their Christianity either immediately, or through Gaul, from Asia Minor—a thing quite possible and easy by means of the commercial intercourse. The later Anglo-Saxons,' he adds, 'who opposed the spirit of ecclesiastical independence among the Britons, and endeavoured to establish the church supremacy of Rome, were uniformly inclined to trace back the church establishments to a Roman origin; from which effort many false legends as well as this [that of Lucius] might have arisen.' [1]

[1] *General Church History*, vol. i. p. 117 (Clarks' ed.).

The remark with which this extract concludes is perfectly just and true. On the other hand, however, it is not impossible that some of these legends arose out of the dimly remembered connection of the Church in Britain in primitive times with the churches of the East. The story of Joseph of Arimathea, for instance, which in the form in which it appears in the legends, is manifestly utterly fabulous,[1] may have had its source in some such traditionary reminiscence of a visitor of that name to the shores of Britain, who had passed through Gaul from the east, after having received the Gospel from the preaching of some of the immediate disciples of the apostles.

Sources of early legends.

Mosheim inclines to this opinion, and very plausibly states it: 'The story of the mission of Joseph of Arimathea from Gaul into Britain by Philip seems to have something of truth in it, though the monks, either from ignorance or pride, or it may be cunning, have corrupted and depraved it. That which happened in Germany and Gaul might have happened in Britain, that holy men, though long removed from the age of the apostles, should be converted into apostolic men. The monks knew, from ancient report and from old documents, that some one called Joseph had come from Gaul into Britain, and there had laboured

Mosheim on early legends.

[1] Mr. Thackeray, vol. i. p. 84, applies to it the words of Apuleius, '*Nihil hac fabula fabulosius, nihil isto mendacio absurdius*,—Nothing more fabulous than this fable—than this lie nothing more absurd.' This is rather strong; it would be very easy from the *Acta Sanctorum*, or any other monkish legends, to match and over-match this story both in fabulousness and in absurdity.

successfully in propagating the Gospel. But since they either knew no other Joseph excepting him of whom mention is made in the history of Christ, or were desirous to extend the glory and power of the British Church even in spite of truth, they feigned that this Joseph was none other than the venerable senator who charged himself with the burial of Christ, and that he had been sent out of Gaul into Britain by St. Philip. As the Galli made Dionysius, a Parisian bishop of the third century, into Dionysius the Areopagite; and the Germans elevated Maternus, Eucharius, and Valerius, who lived in the third and fourth centuries, into teachers of the first, and companions of St. Peter—so, I have no doubt, the British monks made some Joseph who died in the second century to ascend to the earliest age of the Church. In the present day, such stories are to be suspected when they are not sustained by testimony. The history of those who in the second century came with Pothinus into Gaul is involved in great obscurity. Perhaps, among these pious and good men, there was one Philip, who advised Joseph to make a journey into Britain, and him the monks raised to the dignity of the apostleship, that all the parts of their story might be in keeping with each other. We suspect, I say, in the present day, and yet not rashly. For, to say nothing of the fact, that since similar mistakes or cheats are found among all the European nations, it would have been marvellous had nothing of the same sort proceeded from Britain; there appear certain marks of truth in this story not very obscure. That the monks should have selected not one of the apostles, but one of the friends of

Christ; that of these friends they should have pitched on Joseph; that they should make Joseph come into Britain, not at the bidding of Christ, nor by any miracle; and that they should have admitted that he came from Gaul, thereby assigning a higher antiquity to the Church in Gaul than to that in Britain:—these all appear characteristic, not of men who had purposely contrived a fable, but of men who perverted a tradition received from their forefathers, and accommodated it to their own interests.'[1]

There seems great plausibility in this hypothesis, and considerable force in the reasoning by which it is sustained. Certainly it is much more natural to suppose that the monks dressed up in this way the tradition of an actual fact, than that they deliberately set themselves to invent an unmitigated falsehood; and besides, as Mosheim very forcibly shows, if they meant to tell a deliberate lie for the honour of their church, they showed themselves unreasonably timid in the matter, and very gratuitously enfeebled their case by the low ground they assumed.

Opinion of Mr. Hallam as to the early Church.

Mr. Hallam adopts the opinion that the intercourse between Britain and the continent is quite sufficient to account for the amount of Christianity that appears to have existed in the former in the early age of the Church. Whilst, however, he specifies Gaul as one probable source of such influence, he is of opinion that some part of it also may have come from Italy. This is not impossible; at the same time, the fact mentioned by Neander is somewhat against the hypothesis, and

[1] *Comment. de rebus Christianorum*, p. 214.

this comes to be of the greater weight, since there exists not a particle of evidence, direct or indirect, in its favour.

Welsh poetry, it is true, records that Bran, the father of Caractacus, who had followed his son to Rome, and remained as a hostage for him for seven years, returned to Britain a Christian, and was the instrument of converting many of his countrymen to Christianity. But, unhappily for this story, Tacitus, who gives a particular account of the fortunes of Caractacus in his conflict with the Romans, and who mentions the wife, daughters, and brothers of that prince, says nothing of his father; nor could he, for the father of Caractacus must have been dead before his son could have become possessed of the chieftainship; in all probability he was Cunobelinus, who died before the invasion of Britain by that force by which Caractacus was ultimately subdued. Bran, the father of Caractacus, therefore, must pass into the regions of myth, and the story attached to his name be consigned to the rank of a fable.

Legend of Bran.

A circumstance related by the Roman historian Tacitus has been pressed into the service of this hypothesis, as suggesting a possible channel through which Christianity might be conveyed from Italy to Britain. In narrating the events of A.D. 56, that writer tells us that 'Pomponia Græcina, a lady of rank, and the wife of Plautius, who returned from Britain to enjoy a triumph, being accused of foreign superstition, was left to the judgment of her husband. He, according to ancient usage, in the presence of her relations,

Story of Pomponia Græcina.

took cognizance of whatever affected the life and good name of his wife, and pronounced her innocent. This Pomponia lived to a great age, and had a continual sorrow. For after Julia, the daughter of Drusus, had been put to death through the subtlety of Messalina, she lived for forty years, during which time she wore no dress but mourning, and was never otherwise than sad in spirit.'[1]

From this account, it has been inferred that Pomponia Græcina had become a Christian, a supposition which in itself is by no means impossible, for there can be no doubt that Tacitus would have spoken of the religion of Christ exactly as he does when he calls the faith which this lady was accused of embracing 'a foreign superstition.' But the supposition does not strike us as extremely probable, partly because it is stated that her husband, having examined into the charge, pronounced her innocent of it, in which case, if she had adopted Christianity, she must have denied the fact, which is incompatible with the supposition that she had ever embraced it; and partly because of the continual sorrow and depression of spirit which for forty years she endured in consequence of the death of her friend Julia, a state of mind more characteristic of the gloom of heathenism than of that consolatory faith which dries up the mourner's tears, gives 'the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness' (Isa. lxi. 3).

But supposing her to have been a Christian, what has this to do with Britain, and the introduction of

[1] *Annal.*, lib. xiii. c. 32.

the Gospel into that island? In reply to this, it is said that as her husband was for five years lieutenant under Claudius in Britain, it is probable she visited that country with him, and, when there, would doubtless use her influence to propagate the knowledge of the true religion. What a tissue of mere conjecture is all this! No doubt, if she was a Christian, and if she did reside in Britain, it is within the range of possibility that to some of the natives she might teach the truths of the Gospel. But the whole of this is a mere supposition. It is quite uncertain whether she ever was in Britain at all; and even supposing she had resided in Britain during the stormy period of her husband's campaign, is it likely that the lady of the general who had been sent to subdue the turbulent Britons, and whose time was almost wholly occupied in fighting with them, would find it possible to leave the strictly guarded station of the Roman army, to act as a missionary among the people with whom her husband was engaged in fierce and bloody conflict? This, it must be allowed, is not merely conjecture, but very improbable conjecture.

Conjectured connexion of Pomponia with Britain.

Stillingfleet's suggestion is, that Pomponia might have been one of St. Paul's converts at Rome, and that being interested in Britain, she probably urged the apostle to visit that island with the Gospel. We have already seen sufficient reason for concluding that Paul did not visit Britain; but even if it were certain that he had, this attempt to connect his doing so with the efforts of Pomponia would still remain a most gratuitous piece of con-

Pomponia and Paul.

jecture. We have no evidence that she was interested in Britain—no evidence that she was a convert of the apostle's—no evidence that she ever knew him—no evidence of a certain kind that she was a Christian at all. So utterly destitute of the mere shadow of a foundation is this hypothesis of the learned bishop.

Another lady resident at the same time at Rome has been eagerly adduced as establishing a link between Britain and Christianity as it existed in that city in the primitive age. This lady is Claudia Rufina, who is celebrated by the poet Martial[1] for her singular beauty and wit, notwithstanding her descent from 'cæruleis Britannis,' which probably means 'painted Britons.' Of the British descent of this lady there can be no doubt, and it is possible that she belonged to the family of Caractacus, and had, according to a not unfrequent usage, received the name of Claudia out of compliment to the prince to whose generosity they were indebted for their liberty.[2] But where is there any evidence of her Christianity? This is made out in the following way. In an earlier epigram, Martial speaks of the marriage of Claudia to a friend of his named Pudens—

Claudia Rufina, supposed to have been a British lady.

> 'Claudia, Rufe, meo nubit peregrina Pudenti;
> Macte esto taedis, O Hymenæe tuis.'[3]

[1] Lib. xi. Epig. 53.

[2] The *daughter* of Caractacus she could hardly be, though this has been supposed, for this would make Claudia upwards of fifty years of age when Martial celebrated her beauty, and, as we shall see presently, commemorated her marriage. She might be his grand-child, or a collateral descendant.

[3] Lib. iv. Epig. 13.—'O Rufus, Claudia, the foreigner, is

From the title 'peregrina,' or 'foreigner,' here applied to Claudia, it is extremely probable that she is the same person whom Martial celebrates in the passage formerly cited. We may hold it proved, then, that one Pudens, a friend of the poet Martial, married a lady of British extraction, named Claudia. The next step is to turn to the second Epistle to Timothy, where Paul mentions, among a number of Christians at Rome, Pudens and Claudia as sending their salutations to Timothy.[1] Are these the Pudens and Claudia of Martial's epigram? If so, it must be admitted that here was a British lady who had, at an early period, become a convert to Christianity, and whose family connexions and national feelings would strongly lead her to endeavour to send the message of the Gospel to these islands. But all depends here on the *identity* of the parties, and, unhappily, this cannot be proved. Pudens and Claudia were both names too common at Rome for anything to be built upon the mere conjunction of the two in the writings of Paul and Martial; this may be nothing more than one of those purely accidental coincidences which are perpetually occurring where any set of names is in common use.

Marriage of Claudia to Pudens.

On the other hand, there are some things which go to render it almost certain that the parties mentioned by St. Paul could not be the same as those mentioned by Martial. One of these is the well-known character of the

Pudens the 'corrector' of Martial.

being married to my friend Pudens. Haste thee thither, O Hymenæus with thy torches.'

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 21.

latter. He was a licentious and profane heathen, who had little reverence for anything divine or good, whose wit was frivolous and sneering, and whose habits were such as the want of all solid principle might be expected to produce. Now is it at all conceivable that such a man could be on terms of intimate friendship with a friend of the apostle Paul? or does such a supposition at all tally with what we know to have been the relations in which the early converts to Christianity stood to the profligate heathen around them? But Pudens, it is said, appears from Martial's own pages to have been a reprover of his licence and a corrector of his verses; in proof of which the following verses are cited:—

'Cogis me calamo manuque nostra
Emendare meos, Pudens, libellos.'

'Thou constrainest me, O Pudens, to emend with pen and hand my little books.'

But this proves nothing to the point; for, so far as these words go, it might be mere errors in composition which Pudens compelled Martial to correct, whilst his loose and profane sentiments were allowed to remain unreproved and without emendation. What renders this the more probable is, that if Pudens had set himself to act the part of a censor on the writings of Martial, he must have performed his task with singular negligence to have left so much that is offensive to right feeling and principle behind; and indeed, we know nothing that would more decidedly prove that the Pudens of Martial was *not* the friend of St. Paul, than the assumption that the epigrams of Martial, as we now have them,

are such as the former, acting the part of a moral censor, allowed to pass uncorrected.[1]

Pudens of Martial not identical with Pudens of Paul.

This appears to be strongly conclusive against the hypothesis now under consideration; but there is another fact which places its erroneousness beyond any doubt. At the writing of Paul's second Epistle to Timothy, Claudia and Pudens were of sufficient age to be of note among the Christians and to send their salutations to Timothy; they may be fairly presumed, therefore, to have been then from twenty-five to thirty years of age at least. Now that Epistle must have been written at the very latest in the year 67, perhaps earlier. But Martial's epigrams were not written before the year 81, many of them not earlier than the year 96; so that if we assume the middle point between these two years as the probable date of his epigram on Pudens and Claudia, we must suppose them to have been from forty-six

Date of Martial's epigram.

[1] A recent writer, in advocating the identity of the Pudens of Martial with the Pudens of Paul, lays much stress on the circumstance that Martial applies to Pudens the epithet 'sanctus,' *holy*, which, he says, 'seems to be a mere Latin translation of the Greek Ἅγιος, the favourite denomination of a Christian in the first ages.' (Williams, *Claudia and Pudens: An Attempt to show that Claudia mentioned in St. Paul's second Epistle to Timothy was a British Princess.* 1848. p. 34.) But this proves little or nothing; or, at the most, it only shows that, according to Martial's standard of holiness, Pudens was a holy man. That he was a *Christian saint* it no more proves than Quintilian's counsel to parents to select for their sons a 'very holy preceptor,' (*sanctissimum præceptorem.*) *Inst. Or.* i. 2, 5, proves that he would have had them place their children under some Christian bishop. The fact is that *sanctus* is the very word which a heathen would *not* have applied to a Christian.

to fifty-one years of age at that time. Now, in that epigram Martial celebrates the marriage of his friend Pudens with Claudia as then taking place, and the whole tenor of his epigram indicates that the parties were yet youthful; he compares their marriage to the union of cinnamon with spikenard, of Falernian wine with the honey of Athens, etc., and expresses a wish that they may live to be old, and then continue to be as charming to each other as they were then. Who can imagine a poet writing thus of the union of two people of the respectable age of nearly fifty years?

Pudens and Claudia of Paul not in favour with a heathen poet.

But there is another difficulty here. The Pudens and Claudia of St. Paul must, if alive at this time, have been Christians of long standing, whose reputation as such must have been well known. Is it, then, likely that, supposing them to have been married, as they certainly then would have been, with *Christian* rites, a heathen poet would have cared to celebrate such a union, or, if caring to celebrate it, that he would invoke Hymen, and Venus, and the goddess Concordia, to be auspicious to them, as he does here?

Neither of these, surely, is credible. At a time when it was the fashion for literary men at Rome to speak of Christianity as 'a wicked and immoderate superstition,'[1] 'a new and mischievous superstition,'[2] 'a pestilent superstition,'[3] and such like,

[1] Superstitionem pravam et immodicam. Plin. *Ep. ad Traj. Epp.*, lib. x. 97.

[2] Superstitionis novæ ac maleficæ. Sueton. *Vit. Nero.* c. xvi.

[3] Exitiabilis superstitio. Tacit. *Ann.* xv. 44.

can any man believe that a gay and worldly man like Martial would compromise his standing among the wits of the metropolis by publishing a complimentary epigram on the marriage of two individuals, both of whom had embraced this scorned and maligned faith? And, on the other hand, is it conceivable that such a man, intending to utter what would prove agreeable to the parties, should commit so gross a blunder as to invoke the blessing of heathen deities upon those who had solemnly renounced the belief in such, and regarded any act of homage offered to them as a sin of the first magnitude?

These considerations appear decisively to show that the Pudens and Claudia of the poet must have been entirely different persons from the Pudens and Claudia of the apostle. The hypothesis, accordingly, of the British Claudia's being a Christian and taking an interest in the spread of Christianity in the land of her fathers, as it rests entirely and exclusively on this disproved identity, must be discarded.

It thus appears that all the attempts that have been made to detect the particular agency by which Christianity came originally to the shores of Britain are not such as to abide the test of a searching scrutiny. All that has been adduced with this view turns out to be either the deliberate inventions of mendacious chroniclers, or traditionary corruptions of imperfectly remembered facts, the true form of which we can only dimly guess at through the mists in which it has been enveloped, or, in fine, the hypotheses, more or less ingenious, which, on marvellously slender and utterly insufficient bases.

Traditions as to introduction of Christianity into Britain untrustworthy.

learned men have constructed. We must, therefore, content ourselves with admitting that the origin of the Church in Britain is hidden in impenetrable obscurity. We know that at an early period there were native Christians in the southern part, at least, of the island, but whence the light came to them we can only with a certain amount of probability infer, whilst as to the parties by whose instrumentality it was brought we are utterly in the dark.

No certainty as to founders of the Church in other countries.

If there be anything disappointing in such a result, we may console ourselves by the reflection that in this respect the Church in Britain has not been less fortunate than other and no less famous churches. We know not who carried the Gospel into Africa and originated the churches in that land, which, in the early ages of Christianity, were so honourably distinguished. We are in ignorance as to the founder of the churches of Gaul, so early distinguished for the holiness and constancy of their martyrs. We know not even who first proclaimed the Gospel in Italy, or what is the origin of the Church of Rome itself; for the stories she would have us to accept on this head are as stale and putrid as any in a monkish chronicle.

The kingdom of God came not with observation.

The truth is, we know very little in detail of the early progress of the Gospel. It spread on every side by means which did not always attract the eye of man. The kingdom of God came, as was promised, but it came as its great Head had foretold, 'not with observation.' The leaven, according to another of

His teachings, was *hidden* in the mass on which it operated, and thus it was not till the result was attained that its influence became apparent. Hence, of those who were the heralds of salvation to the different nations of the earth 'in the beginning of the Gospel,' the greater part must, so far as earthly fame is concerned, 'be content to be as though they had not been: to be found in the register of God, not in the records of men.'[1]

We may feel as if it would have been pleasant for us to know the names, that we might have revered the memory of those to whom our own land owes so much. But God, who would have us 'keep ourselves from idols,' doubtless saw meet that such knowledge should not be granted to us. He has permitted the tide of oblivion to roll over the names and deeds of those who first brought the glad tidings to our shores. Let us, however, gratefully acknowledge His goodness, in sending to our rude ancestors such a precious boon; and let us cherish with holy triumph the assurance that almost from apostolic times 'the glorious Gospel of the blessed God' has been preached in our land, and that amid the strains of gladness with which 'the multitude of the isles' saluted their King, the rugged tones of Britain were not unheard, mingling in the triumphant chorus, and losing all their harshness in its manifold harmony.

[1] Sir T. Browne, *Hydriotaphia.*

CHAPTER VII.

TRACES AND GLIMPSES OF THE CHURCH OF BRITAIN TILL THE BEGINNING OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

'The mountain-dews shall nourish
A seed in weakness sown,
Whose fruit shall spread and flourish,
And shake like Lebanon.'

MONTGOMERY.

THE obscurity which hangs over the origin of the ancient British Church is not greatly dissipated as we advance to consider its subsequent fortunes. We know that it continued to exist, and to make progress among the native population, but only a few detached facts have reached us connected with its history, either outward or inward.

We can easily believe that at first the progress of the Gospel must have been slow, and that what successes were gained by its adherents, were gained in the face of much opposition. The ignorance of the people, the unsettled state of the country, and the influence of Druidism on the one hand, and of the gayer and laxer polytheism of the Romans upon the other, would raise many barriers and plant many thorns in the path of those who were striving to point their benighted countrymen to 'the Lamb of

Barriers to the spread of Christianity in Britain.

God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' On the other hand, we may believe that the conflict between the Druids and the Romans, and especially the extirpation of the former by the latter, would have a powerful effect, both in awakening the minds of the people to processes of religious thought, and in removing the spell under which their hereditary dread of the Druids must have kept them.

Antagonism between the Romans and the Druids.

From the first appearance of the Romans in Britain, they and the Druids seem to have felt that they were the natural antagonists of each other, and that no alliance could ever be formed between them. Both claimed supremacy; and the reign of the one could rise only on the ruins of that of the other. Hence the Druids were always and everywhere the active instigators of revolt against Rome, and through their machinations the dominion of the emperor over Britain was rendered so insecure, and his lieutenants subjected to such incessant annoyance, that it was resolved utterly to extirpate the whole Druidical body.

Extermination of the Druids.

The execution of this design fell into the hands of Suetonius Paulinus, a man of great military skill, and of true Roman firmness. Taking advantage of the retreat of numbers of the rebellious into Anglesey, which was the residence of the arch-Druid, and where their principal strength was collected, he determined on the capture of that island. A sufficient number of flat-bottomed vessels having been provided, he transported his infantry in these, while his cavalry either found passage by means of shallows, or swimming

their horses, crossed the narrow channel that separates the island from the mainland.

Intense excitement reigned on the opposite shore. The fighting men were drawn up in order of battle on the beach in great numbers and well armed. Rushing amidst their ranks were seen numbers of women, in aspect like the Furies, dressed in funereal garb, with their hair dishevelled, and brandishing torches. Around the host stood the Druids, whose office forbade them to mingle in the conflict, but who, with uplifted hands, imprecated fearful curses upon their daring assailants. For awhile the strangeness of the scene, and perhaps also some lurking feelings of superstitious dread, paralysed the energies of the legionaries, so that they stood motionless, as if doubtful whether to fight or flee. But their general, who had retained his presence of mind, speedily roused them by his admonitions; and somewhat ashamed at having quailed before a band of women and fanatics, they cast aside their hesitation and rushed upon the foe.

A severe, but brief conflict ensued. The Britons were everywhere borne back by the disciplined troops of the invader; soldiers, priests, and women were mingled in one mass of confusion; indiscriminate and merciless slaughter avenged the brief check which Roman prowess had sustained; and it is said that, in the intensity of their fury, the Romans even consumed the Druids in their own fires. A guard was placed on the island, the sacred groves of the Druids were cut down, and all traces of their former authority obliterated.[1]

[1] Tacit., *Annal.* xiv. 30.

From this time the influence of Druidism gradually declined in South Britain, and, in a short time, it became apparently extinct. If we assume that Christianity found its way to Britain before the close of the first century, we must regard the overthrow of the Druidical hierarchy as calculated materially to facilitate its progress. At the same time, it may be regarded as certain that much of the pernicious influence of this system long lingered in the minds of the people, and proved antagonistic to the progress of the Gospel of Christ.

Decline of Druidical influence.

The seductive influence, also, of Roman manners and vices formed another obstacle in the way of the truth; at first repudiated, these were gradually embraced, and the British youth of the age of Hadrian gloried in practices which their ancestors of the age of Julius Cæsar would have treated with indignation or contempt. To corrupt that they might conquer was part of the insidious policy of the masters of the world. Agricola, one of the best and ablest of the generals sent into Britain, systematically laboured to carry out this principle in his province. He encouraged the people to build temples, market-places, and houses; to send their children to be instructed in the Roman language and literature; to wear the dress and imitate the luxuries of their conquerors.

Corruption of British youth by Roman manners.

Such efforts expended upon a rude and restless people might entitle him by whom they were put forth to the highest encomiums for philanthropy, were it not that, unhappily, we know his only motive to have been the more effectual enslavement of the people. His biographer and son-in-law eulogizes

these endeavours as 'very salutary schemes,' by which he means that they were serviceable to the designs of Rome; and after enumerating the plans followed by Agricola, he sneeringly adds, 'By degrees they [the Britons] slid down under the attractions of vice; porticoes, baths, and elegant entertainments were indulged in; and they, ignorant people, called that *humanity* which was nothing else than a part of their slavery.'[1] In such a state of society, Christianity was likely to meet with obstacles even more insuperable than those arising from barbarism and rudeness.

There were circumstances, however, on the other hand, connected with the position of the Christians in Britain, which were favourable to the progress of their cause. After the defeat of Boadicea by Suetonius Paulinus, A.D. 61, several years of peace succeeded, during which the votaries of the new faith would have opportunities of promulgating their doctrines. From its insular position, also, the Christians in Britain were exempted alike from those harassing persecutions to which multitudes of believers were in other parts of the Roman empire exposed, and from those pernicious heresies which at a very early period had crept into the Church, and been the occasion of the fall of many, as well as of much disturbance and discredit to the churches in which they had been suffered to acquire strength.

Circumstances favourable to Christianity in Britain.

With occasional interruptions from the occurrence of insurrections on the part of some of the tribes

[1] Tacit., *Vit. Agr.* c. xxi.

against the Roman rule, and of incursions into the provinces on the part of the unsubdued Britons to the north of the wall of Antoninus, this season of repose may be said to have lasted for nearly two centuries and a half. During this time, though the majority of the nation, as well as of the Roman colonists, remained in a state of heathenism, we may indulge the hope that the Gospel was silently winning its way into many hearts, and that churches were gradually formed by the mutual association of those who, through the acceptance of 'the common salvation,' had become 'one in Christ Jesus.'

Two centuries of peace for Christianity.

These churches were probably, in the first instance, like some of which we read in the New Testament, accustomed to assemble in private dwellings, or it may be in the retirement of some grove, for purposes of worship and religious fellowship. But before the termination of the third century there were edifices in Britain devoted to the purposes of Christian worship, as is evident from the statement of Gildas and Bede, that after the fury of the Diocletian persecution had expended itself in Britain, the Christians there who had escaped 'rebuilt the churches that had been razed even to the ground.'[1] Doubtless these were very humble edifices, though it is going too far, perhaps, to say of all of them that 'the fabric was of wood and the roof of straw.'[2] After the Romans had taught the Britons to build temples and baths

Churches in Britain.

[1] 'Renovant ecclesias ad solum usque destructas.'—Beda, *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. i. c. viii. Gildas, *De Excid. Brit.* § 12.

[2] Thackeray, vol. i. p. 188.

and dwelling-houses of stone, we may believe that in the larger towns, such as London, Verulam, and Canterbury, the Christians, before the end of the third century, had churches of the same material.

Of whatever materials, however, their religious edifices were composed, we may rest assured that they would be characterized by plainness and simplicity. No pictures, no images, no crosses, no symbolical sculpture of any kind, was to be found in any of the Christian churches of that age.[1] A table for the observance of the Lord's Supper, a low pulpit for the reading and exposition of Scripture—these formed the entire furniture of Christian churches, even in Italy itself, at the beginning of the third century. Less than this could not have sufficed for the barest purposes of utility; more than this neither the condition of the early Christians permitted, nor their humility desired. We may rest well assured that the Christians in Britain did not exceed this modest apparatus.

Plainness of early British churches.

The immunity which the British Church had enjoyed from persecution, though long continued, was at length interrupted. In the end of the third century, Diocletian ascended the imperial throne, a prince of base origin, but of great abilities, and whose reign was marked by many features of singular excellence. His natural temper, though haughty and severe, does not appear to have been that of a persecutor, and at the commencement of his administration he showed himself not disinclined to favour the Christians. But

Persecution of Diocletian.

[1] See Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, bk. viii. c. viii.

whether it was that power and military success had corrupted his mind,[1] or that he was instigated by the blood-thirsty spirit of his colleague Maximian and his son-in-law Galerius, certain it is that before he resigned the imperial purple he had employed his great administrative powers to organize a system of universal and unsparing persecution of the Christians, and had issued his edicts for the carrying of this into effect over all the provinces of the empire.

It is with persecution as with fire: when once it is kindled every breeze fans it into greater fury, until it spreads, in many cases, greatly beyond what the author of it originally intended. So it apparently did in this case. What was probably designed by Diocletian merely as a limited measure of severity, soon burst forth into a general persecution, which raged with unexampled fury, especially in Syria and the east, for ten years. Spread of persecution.

In Gaul and Britain, the administration was in the hands of Constantius Chlorus, a man of mild disposition, who did all in his power to mitigate evils, which, nevertheless, it was not competent for him, in his official capacity, altogether to prevent. Whilst he suffered the churches of the Christians to be destroyed, and their books to be burned, he endeavoured as far as he could to shield their persons

[1] He claimed to be called and revered as God. The remark of Aurelius Victor on this is, 'Quîs rebus compertum habeo humillimos quosque, maxime ubi alta accesserunt, superbiâ atque ambitione immodicos esse.'—'Hence, I find that those who are of humblest origin, when once they have been highly exalted, are unbounded in their pride and ambition.'—*De Cæsaribus*, c. xxxix.

from injury.[1] In those parts where he himself personally superintended affairs, very little suffering seems to have befallen the Christians. But there must have been many of his subordinate officers to whom the opportunity of gratifying either fanatical bigotry or the lust of plunder under imperial sanction, would form an irresistible temptation to let loose the utmost fury of persecution against the Christians; and hence it is not surprising that in certain parts of Britain which lay remote from the immediate influence of Constantius, the blood of the Christians should have been shed, and other sufferings endured by them.

British martyrs.

From the narratives of Gildas, Geoffrey of Monmouth, and Bede, it appears to have been in the district lying between the modern counties of Hertford and Monmouth inclusive, that the persecution prevailed most hotly. All these historians concur in attesting that many persons suffered martyrdom at this time in Britain, and that noble instances were given of piety, devotedness, and courage, by those who were called in question for their attachment to the cause of Christ. Of these early martyrs, the names of four have been preserved—Alban, a native of Verulam; Amphibalus, who suffered at Redbourne, near St. Albans; and Aaron and Julius, natives of Caerleon on the Usk, in Monmouthshire.

Bede has narrated at length, and with much effect, the legendary account of the first of these. Whilst yet a pagan, he benevolently concealed a

[1] Lactant., *De Mort. Pers.*, c. xv.

Christian pastor[1] who was hotly pursued by the persecutors, and thereby saved his life. Attracted and impressed by the piety of his guest, Alban was led to listen to his instruction, and thus was brought to renounce paganism and embrace Christianity. A new and still deeper motive to protect the life of the fugitive was thus incited within him; and accordingly, when at length the place of his concealment was discovered, and soldiers were sent to secure his person, Alban exchanged clothes with his teacher, sent him away to a safe place, and allowed himself to be seized and carried before the judge in his stead. He was brought at a time when the latter was engaged in sacrificing to his idols, and as he stood by the altar, the Christian confessor was threatened by the judge, who was filled with rage at the escape of the person whom he had doomed to destruction, with the same penalty which had been destined for the other, if he apostatized from the religion of his fathers.

Bede's history of Alban.

Alban, unmoved by his threats, and girt with the armour of the spiritual soldier, refused to submit to his injunction. 'Of what family or race art thou?' asked the judge. 'What is it to thee,' replied Alban, 'of what stock I am sprung? But if thou desirest to learn the truth concerning my religion, know that I am already a Christian, and occupy myself with Christian offices.' The judge then demanded his name, to which he replied, 'By

[1] Bede does not give his name, but the tradition is that it was Amphibalus, the same who at a later period also suffered martyrdom. [Yet this martyr is supposed to have been 'invented out of Alban's cloak (*amphibalus*).']

my parents I am called Alban, and I adore and worship the living and true God who created the universe.' On this the judge, filled with anger, said, 'If thou desirest to enjoy eternal life, sacrifice without delay to the great gods.' 'These sacrifices,' replied Alban, 'which you offer to demons can neither aid the subjects nor accomplish the desires and wishes of those who are suppliant; on the contrary, whosoever brings offerings to these images shall receive eternal punishment as his portion.'

Infuriated at this bold reply, the judge ordered him to be tortured by scourging; and as he bore this with unflinching fortitude, and still refused to recant, he was ordered to be beheaded. Many portents are said to have accompanied his martyrdom, by which and by his constancy the judge was so much struck that he commanded the persecution to cease. From this martyr, who was afterwards canonized, the town of Verulam received the name it still bears of St. Albans.[1]

Effects of Persecution.

Experience has everywhere shown that to persecute men for their religious opinions is not the way to prevent these opinions from spreading. On the contrary, those who have resorted to this expedient have not only in general been utterly baffled in their attempts, but have had the mortification to find that the means they employed to destroy have rather tended to extend and confirm the empire of the proscribed opinions. 'Persecution,' says an ingenious French

[1] The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* places the martyrdom of St. Alban under the year 286. Bede gives the 22nd of June as the day.

writer, 'has this peculiarity, that where it does not revolt, it is because there it was unnecessary; the people who endure it were not worth the dreading. Wherever it is necessary, it revolts, and so becomes useless.'[1] Wherever religious convictions have taken such hold on the minds of men that systems to which they are opposed require to be sustained by the violent expedient of persecution, it has then usually become too late to persecute; the new opinions are too deeply rooted to be extirpated by such means, whilst the use of them excites sympathy for the sufferers, draws attention to their constancy and their sincerity, and thereby prepares the way for the more extensive and favourable consideration of their opinions.

In the early history of Christianity, this was so strikingly exemplified, that the saying went abroad that 'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.' What effect the persecution had in Britain we have not the means of exactly determining; but that it neither extirpated Christianity, nor retarded its progress, we have reason to be well assured. Gildas speaks of the believers as coming forth from their hiding-places to rebuild their levelled churches and celebrate their interrupted festivals, 'displaying their conquering ensigns in all places,' as if they had gained a triumph by their endurance and sufferings. There can be no doubt that the flame of persecution purified as well as stimulated the Church here as elsewhere, and tended greatly to its increase.

Growth of the Church in Britain.

Probably it is to this period that we are to assign

[1] Constant, *Mélanges de Littérature*, p. 319.

the introduction of Christianity into Scotland and Ireland. We find it there not very long subsequent to this period, and as it evidently entered Scotland from the south, and thence probably crossed over into Ireland, it seems more than probable that it was carried to the former of these countries by some of the fugitives from the Diocletian persecution. As in the first age of the Church, the Christians at Jerusalem, who were dispersed by the persecution that arose after the martyrdom of Stephen, 'went everywhere preaching the Gospel,' may we not believe that a similar effect followed the persecution of the Church in Britain, and that, by the dispersion of its members for a season, the light was carried only the more widely, so as to reach the congeneric tribes who dwelt among the wilds of Caledonia, or roamed the green plains of Ierne?

Introduction of Christianity into Scotland and Ireland.

The persecution ceased on the accession of Constantius to the throne of the empire. As soon as he had the reins of power in his hands, this prince gave orders that all proceedings against the Christians should be dropped, and that they should be left to the free and peaceable possession of their religion. The emperor being at that time at York, Britain was one of the first provinces of the empire to experience the benefits of this merciful and righteous edict; and during the whole of his reign, as well as throughout that of his successor and son Constantine the Great, himself a native of Britain, and the son of a British mother, the Church in Britain enjoyed the benefits of the imperial protection.

Persecution stopped by Constantius.

In the year 314, the emperor Constantine summoned a council of ecclesiastics at Arles, in Gaul, for the purpose of determining a dispute which had arisen among certain ecclesiastics in Africa out of the election of a bishop to the see of Carthage. At this council, three bishops from Britain attended, namely, Eborius from the city of York, Restitutus from the city of London, and Adelfius from the city of Caerleon;[1] the last of whom, according to one account, was accompanied by a deacon named Arminius.

Council of Arles. British bishops summoned.

Had we any clue to the principle on which the bishops who were summoned to this council were selected, it might aid us in determining, from the three bishops summoned from Britain, some things as to the condition of the Church there. But no such clue exists, and in the absence of it we know not whether these three were the only bishops then in Britain, or were selected from others; and if the latter, whether it was because of the importance of the cities where they resided, or because of their individual reputation, or because they might be personally known to the emperor, or because they were officially entitled to represent the province in which they lived at such convocations, that they were chosen. Hence it is impossible for us to infer more

[1] In the list, this third bishop is said to have been '*De civitate colonia Londinensium.*' This is manifestly a blunder, to correct which various conjectures have been offered. One is that of Stillingfleet, who reads, '*ex civitate Colon, Leg.* ii.,' that is, from the city, the colony of the second legion, that is, Caerleon. [Haddan and Stubbs suggest '*Legionensium*,' also meaning Caerleon, on Usk. Prof. Bright inclines to '*Lindensium*,' meaning Lincoln.]

from their presence at the council of Arles than that (to use the words of Dr. Henry)[1] 'the British Church was in a settled and respectable state' at the beginning of the fourth century.

But though little can be inferred from the mere summoning of so many bishops out of Britain to the council of Arles, we may gather much from the canons passed by that council as to the order and usage of the churches in Gaul and Britain at this time. These canons may be divided into two classes, the former having respect to matters of order, and the latter to questions of discipline.

Canons passed as to British Church.

Under the former, we find it enjoined that ministers are to abide in the places where they have been ordained; that ministers who act the part of usurers are to be suspended from communion; that deacons are not, as they had in many places been used to do, to administer the eucharist; that no bishop is to intrude upon the diocese of another; that no person is to ordain bishops alone, but this must be done by the concurrence of seven other bishops; or, where this is impossible, of not fewer than three.

Order of the Church.

As to matters of discipline, we find that actors in the theatres, charioteers at the public games, and women who had been married to unbelievers, were to be suspended for a time from communion; that those who falsely accused their brethren were not to be re-admitted to the communion; that none who were excommunicated in one place were to be restored in a different place;

Discipline of the Church.

[1] *History*, vol. i. p. 143.

that those who had been once baptized in the faith of the Holy Trinity were not to be rebaptized; and that if any of the clergy could be proved to have, during the time of persecution, delivered up the sacred books or vessels to the destroyer, or to have betrayed their brethren, they were to be deposed.

These canons indicate the existence of a regularly constituted order of polity, partaking essentially of the episcopal type, in the churches represented at the council, as well as praiseworthy zeal for the purity of their communion; and as they were adopted 'by the common consent' of all present, we may conclude that they describe, so far as they go, the state of things in these respects in the Church of Britain.

Council of Arles independent of the Bishop of Rome.

It is also of importance to notice that this council carried on their deliberations and formed their decisions independently of the bishop of Rome. This council was neither summoned by him, nor was he so much as present at it, except by deputy; and the parties by whom he was represented assumed no supremacy in the council, arrogated no right of control over the proceedings, and did not even preside at the meetings. It is true that at the close of their proceedings the council sent a copy of their decisions to Sylvester,[1] who at that time presided over the Church in Rome; but in doing so they address him as 'brother Sylvester' (*fratri Sylvestro*),

[1] Among the canons of this council was one that ordained uniformity in the observance of Easter, and directed the Bishop of Rome to address a letter to the churches upon the subject, 'in accordance with custom.'

and intimate distinctly that the canons were sent to him simply that he might give them due publicity.

Had they acknowledged any such supremacy in him as the popes assert has been conceded to the see of Rome from the earliest times, they would have been presided over, if not by himself, yet by his legate, and would, in their report to him, have addressed him as 'papa,' and would have humbly submitted their decrees to him for his confirmation. As it was, they merely acknowledged him as a brother, and availed themselves of his position in the great metropolis of the world to get their canons made known to all; just as the emperors were wont to send their edicts to the prætorian prefect to be divulged.[1]

Conclusions as to state of British Church in the third century.

From these facts we may conclude that, at the end of the third century, Christianity had made considerable progress in Britain, that the Church there had been brought into a state of recognised order and discipline, and that it stood upon a footing of independence in relation to the other churches of the west with which it was at the same time fraternally associated.

[1] This is the analogy suggested by De Marca, himself a Romanist archbishop. *De Concord.*, iii. 7, 14.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BRITISH CHURCH OF THE FOURTH CENTURY.

'That heresies should strike (if truth be scanned
Presumptuously) their roots both wide and deep,
Is natural as dreams to feverish sleep.'

WORDSWORTH.

In the early part of the fourth century, the Church was distracted by the Arian controversy. To superficial inquirers this controversy has sometimes appeared little better than a strife about words, and surprise has been expressed that such differences should have excited so much feeling, and thrown the Church into such agitation. But the words for which the parties in this controversy contended stood as the symbols of certain sets of ideas, and between these the difference was so great that the entire essence of Christianity was involved in the discussion. The Arian controversy.

If the views of Arius, according to which the Redeemer of mankind was nothing higher than a creature, though the highest of all creatures, be sound, all doctrines built upon the Divinity of our Lord must be relinquished, the entire scheme of salvation by atonement must be given up, and Christianity must be reduced to a System of Arius.

system whose highest claims on our respect are derived from the purer ethics, or the more elevated theosophy, or the more spiritual worship which it inculcates, as compared with the religions of heathenism, or the speculations of unassisted reason. On the other hand, if the doctrines for which the party opposed to Arius contended be true—if the Bible teach that man, as a sinner, can be saved only through an atonement of infinite value—if it assert that this atonement has been offered by the obedience unto death of Jesus Christ—if it assure us that the infinite merit of that obedience arose from the presence of God in the human nature of Christ—if it summon us to avow and reverence Him as 'God manifest in the flesh,' the Son of God, one with the Father,—then must the system of Arius be denounced not only as most false, but as tending to the utter destruction of the whole scheme of Divine truth as revealed to us in the word of God.

The Arian controversy not a mere strife of words.

It is only the grossest ignorance, therefore, or the most inveterate dishonesty, which can lead any one to represent the controversy between these two parties as a mere logomachy. Whether man is to be accepted of God by following, as he best can, the wise philosophy and the excellent example of a creature, or is to be rescued from sin and restored to God by the propitiatory mediatorship of a Divine Redeemer, is surely a question of the profoundest interest and the greatest weight to all mankind.

In the year 325, the famous Council of Nicæa was summoned with special reference to the settlement of this controversy. We have no information as to

the presence of any of the British clergy at this illustrious convocation; but as the Emperor was anxious to collect the opinions of the whole Church upon the matters to be brought before the council, it is not likely that he would neglect to invite representatives from Britain, with which he was so closely connected; and that such were actually present we may infer from the assertion of Eusebius that 'the most eminent bishops of *all the churches of all Europe*, as well as those of Asia and Africa,'[1] were brought together by the summons of the Emperor at Nicæa, not excepting, as he tells us, a representative from the far distant Scythæ, or Goths. As Eusebius knew well of the existence of the Church in Britain, we can hardly believe that he would have used such language had he known (and he *must* have known it had it been the case) that none of the British clergy were present. Be this, however, as it may, we have reason to believe that the decisions of that council, by which Arianism was so emphatically condemned, were nowhere more cordially accepted than in Britain.

Council of Nicæa.

Bede, it is true, following Gildas, asserts that the British Christians did not escape the poisonous arrows of this pernicious heresy, and intimates that it had spread extensively among a people ever fond of novelty, and never long steadfast in their attachment to anything.[2] But both Gildas and Bede have shown themselves so anxious to fix upon the early

Testimony of Bede and Gildas as to Arianism in Britain.

[1] *De Vit. Constant.*, lib. iii. c. vii. [See Haddan and Stubbs *Councils*, i. 8.]

[2] *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. i. c. viii.

British Christians the charge of heresy, that all their assertions on this head must be taken with hesitation. In the case before us, if their statement be not altogether false, it is grossly exaggerated, for we are able to confront it with the contemporary testimony of Athanasius, Jerome, and Chrysostom, all of whom attest the orthodoxy of the British churches, and their adherence to the Nicene faith.[1]

Council of Ariminum.

The presence of British bishops at the Council of Ariminum, held A.D. 359, where a creed somewhat more inclining to Arianism than that of Nicæa was adopted, proves nothing against this testimony; for, on the one hand, it is indubitable that this council, when it spoke the real convictions of its members, declared its adherence to the Nicene Creed, and that it was only through constraint and management on the part of the emperor Constantius, who was favourable to the Arian party, that another decision was ultimately given; and on the other hand, we know that after the death of Constantius, the Gallican bishops, with whom those of Britain were usually associated, solemnly renounced the decision of the Council of Ariminum, and returned to that of the Council of Nicæa.[2]

Introduction of monastic institutions into Britain.

It appears to have been some time in the fourth century that monastic institutions were introduced into Britain, though we can neither detect the exact time, nor have we the least knowledge of the medium of their introduction. We may, however, with some probability, conjecture that this, like most of the

[1] Stillingfleet, p. 175. Henry, i. 148.
[2] Hilarii *Frag.*, quoted by Stillingfleet, p. 175.

other institutions of the British Church, was borrowed from the East. In that quarter especially, monachism had by this time arrived at considerable repute; and as it had already become customary for devotees from Britain to make pilgrimages to Palestine, where they not only visited the sacred places which fame and the Scriptures had made known to them, but also had an opportunity of witnessing what Jerome, who gives us this account, calls 'a flower of most precious store among the ornaments of the Church, the bands of monks and virgins'[1]—it is natural to conclude that some of these pilgrims returned smitten with the ascetic spirit, and bent upon following at home the usages with which they had seen it associated abroad.

Early British monasteries different from those of later times.

The monasteries, however, which at this early period were organized in Britain, were very different from the institutions which in later times bore that name. The inmates were for the most part, if not exclusively, laymen, and they aimed at nothing more than the securing of opportunities for study and meditation by their seclusion from the world. Of these, the most ancient and eminent was that at Bangor, a locality described as ten miles from Chester, and supposed to be the same as that now called Bangor-Iscoed ('Bangor of the underwood'), in Flintshire, to distinguish it from Bangor in Caernarvonshire. Here a considerable number of persons were collected, who supported themselves by

[1] *Epist. Paulæ et Eustochii ad Marcellam;* included in Jerome's works (tom. iii. ep. xvii.) and written doubtless by him.

the labour of their hands, and combined the pursuits of learning with exercises of piety and the toils of handicraft. In the beginning of the seventh century, Bede says this monastery contained so great a number of monks that it was divided into seven parts, with a ruler over each, and each containing three hundred persons. This is doubtless an exaggeration; if there were three hundred altogether, it was a very large number. Many of these, Bede attests, were very learned men, which, as the testimony of one who was no friend to them, must be admitted as redounding to the credit of the monastery.

Of these monks, the mass have passed away in their quietude without leaving so much as the record of their names behind. To one of them, however, a different fortune has been assigned; it was his destiny to draw the attention of the world upon him whilst he lived, and to impress his name upon a system of opinions which have continued to stir controversy among Christians from this day to the present. This was Pelagius, the far-famed opponent of Augustine, bishop of Hippo, and the most noted supporter in his day, if not the author, of the opinions which are still known and still discussed under the name of Pelagian. Of his being a native of the British Isles there is no doubt, but some hesitation has occasionally been shown in admitting that he belonged to that part of Britain which lies south of the Tweed.

Pelagius.

The only ground for doubt on this point, however, is furnished by the coarse expression used of him by Jerome, who, alluding to his corpulent habit of body, says that he was 'overloaded with Scots por-

ridge,'[1] from which some have contended that he was one of the Scoti, who then inhabited Ireland, and that it was from an Irish Bangor, and not that in Wales, that he proceeded.[2] But little stress can be laid on an angry expression like this, in which the name of a barbarous tribe was probably purposely selected to give greater force to the vituperation. All other evidence concurs in making Pelagius a Briton properly so called; and Welsh tradition has even handed down *Morgan* as the name he originally bore, and which on going to the East he exchanged for its Greek equivalent Pelagius.[3]

Character and teaching of Pelagius.

Though famous as an heresiarch, Pelagius was not personally a man of bad character. On the contrary, from what little we know of his private life, and even of his opinions, apart from those for which he came under censure, we are led to regard him as a man of sincere piety. His moral character was without reproach. His estimate of the excellence demanded of the Christian was elevated; his sense of human responsibility was strong and quick; and his efforts to reach the lofty standard he had placed before him were steady and earnest. For the word of God he had implicit reverence; it was to him the only source of full information as to the will of God;[4] of its

[1] 'Prægravatum pultibus Scotorum,' *In Jerem. Præf.*

[2] Moore, *Hist. of Ireland*, vol i. p. 206.

[3] Morgan signifies in British *Sea-born*; Πελάγιος denotes in Greek a person connected with the sea, one living by the side of the sea, or coming from the sea.

[4] His own words are: 'In scripturis divinis per quas solas potes plenam Dei intelligere voluntatem.' *Ep. ad Demetriad.*, c. ix.

pages he was an unwearied student; and to its dictates he sought to refer the ultimate decision on all questions of faith and duty.

Though a monk, he could detect the dangers to which the ascetic spirit, if not vigorously controlled, exposed its subjects, and earnestly warned his associates against that hypocrisy, spiritual pride, and secret carnality of which the virtues of the monastic life were too often the mere coverts (*umbracula*). Of many of the incipient errors of the Church he was the steadfast opponent. He denounced the notion of sacramental salvation. He opposed strenuously the fiction of purgatory. He contended for the eternity of the punishments of hell. He was the unsparing enemy of antinomianism in all its shapes, entreating men not to be seduced by the pernicious doctrine that if a man had faith in Christ and was baptized he was sure of salvation, however much he might indulge in sin; and urging upon all man's ability to keep the commandments of God in opposition to those who sought to exempt men from responsibility by representing the keeping of God's law as physically impossible. In the judgment of his great antagonist, Augustine, Pelagius was a good and praiseworthy man—an eminent Christian.[1] 'I not only have loved him,' writes the large-souled Bishop of Hippo, 'but I love him still.'[2]

In the opinions which men embrace they are often insensibly swayed by the peculiar circum-

[1] Istum bonum prædicandum virum. Ille tam egregie Christianus. *De peccatorum meritis et remissione*, lib. iii. c. iii.

[2] Non solum dileximus, verum etiam diligimus eum. *Ep.* 186.

stances under which, or the peculiar point of view from which, they contemplate the topics involved in them. In the case of Pelagius, this seems to have been strikingly exemplified. Of an acute, shrewd, and thoroughly practical mind, but not possessed of much depth of thought, breadth of comprehension, or earnestness of feeling, he had no great respect for speculative difficulties, and was apt, in order to get rid of any that lay in his way, to adopt the most plausible hypothesis that presented itself to his clever, but not very powerful intellect, without stopping to inquire carefully whether his conclusion was built upon a full or only a one-sided induction of particulars.

Dealing of Pelagius with difficulties.

This habit of mind the discipline of the cloister was not calculated to correct; on the contrary, the ascetic character of the monastic piety, which leads the devotee to an intropenetrative rather than a diffusive religion, fixes attention intensely upon the details of his every-day activity, places before him a fixed standard of practical excellence, his daily approaches to which, or the opposite, admit of being marked and registered, and summons him to a continual exercise of his powers in the doing of something that shall help him forward, or the guarding against something by which he would be retarded, could not but exert a powerful influence in confirming and increasing such a habit. Pelagius thus came forth to the world with an undue bias towards the merely experimental and practical side of the Christian life, with a tendency to press too far narrow and partial views of truth, and with a disposition to insist pertinaciously and with hair-

splitting ingenuity upon particular lines of argument, without due regard to other lines lying equally within the scope of a thorough consideration of the subject in hand.

In becoming acquainted with the churches both in the East and the West, but especially the latter, he found much that was offensive to his notions of Christian purity. He saw with horror the looseness of practice which prevailed in many quarters. He was startled by the substitution of logical forms of spiritual truth for that practical godliness which he had been taught to regard as the prime excellence of the Christian life. He beheld with indignation the prevalence of notions as to man's inability to follow goodness, and as to the saving power of rites and orthodox beliefs apart from personal sanctity.

Views of Pelagius as to Christian life and original sin.

Against these errors he loudly declaimed. But in doing so, he went to an opposite extreme. He maintained that the keeping of God's commandments was so exclusively religious, that if a man were but right here, it mattered little what dogmas he might hold or reject. He insisted not only that man was physically able to keep God's law, but that there was nothing even of a moral nature to prevent his keeping it, and that perfectly.

He was thus led to deny the doctrine of human corruption, and by necessary consequence the doctrine of original sin. Adam, he affirmed, sinned for himself alone, and his posterity are sinners not in virtue of any connexion either natural or federal with him, but simply through the force of imitation. He viewed infants at their birth as in exactly the

same position as Adam was when first created, with this sole difference, that he was in full possession of his faculties, which they are not; hence, as Adam might have persevered in obedience and holiness, so it is possible for each of the human race to live without sin; and it may be, in spite of the terrible force of evil example, that some there are who have so lived. For such of course no redemption is needed; though even to them the death of Christ brings advantage, inasmuch as by His teaching and example, by the communication through Him of supernatural influence, and by the grace of baptism in His name, they are enabled to attain to a higher pitch of excellence than they otherwise could have reached.

But of the race in general it is true that they are sinners, and as such in need of pardon and reconciliation to God. This is secured to them by the work of Christ, whose atonement was not made for any particular class or number of men, but for all; and through whom, therefore, all who will may be saved. In order to this, sinners must believe in Him and do His will; both of which it is in the power of man to do without any aid from above, though part of the benefits obtained by those who believe in Christ consists in supernatural gifts, by which they are enabled to follow Christ more perfectly than they otherwise would.

Views of Pelagius respecting the atonement.

As the salvation of the individual through Christ is thus purely and absolutely a matter depending on himself, there is no such thing as irresistible, converting grace, no such thing as special election, no

such thing as predestination except as conditioned by foreknowledge on the part of God of the individual's faith and piety. By the death of Christ, salvation is placed before every man; and as the will of man is perfectly free, it depends exclusively on himself, by an act of choice which God neither predestinates nor influences, to secure this salvation. Having thus become one of the saints by his own act, it rests with him by the exercise of his free-will to continue in this state, and it is possible for those who have been once saints to fall away and be finally lost.[1]

Errors of Pelagius.

We have endeavoured to state thus distinctly the leading tenets of Pelagius, because of the relation of the subject to the History of the Ancient British Church. It is no part of our present duty to enter minutely and polemically into the merits of his system; but we cannot pass on without remarking, that whilst there is much in it that appears to us true and important, it is, nevertheless, burdened with serious errors, arising principally, we believe, from that narrowness of view and one-sided asceticism to which we have already referred as characteristic of its author.

Wrong estimate of human nature.

The fundamental error of Pelagius lay in his wrong estimate of the condition of human nature. It is perfectly true that man is free to choose between good and evil, as respects the original constitution of his mind; but it is no less true that man, because of sin, is under a

[1] See Emerson's translation of Wigger's *Historical Presentation of Augustinism and Pelagianism from the original sources*. Andover, U.S. Neander's *Church Hist.*, vol. iv. pp. 313–322. Hampden's *Bampton Lectures*, lects. iv., v.

bias which ever leads him to choose the evil, not *as* evil, but *for* good, which, in the words of Scripture, leads him to 'put good for evil and evil for good; sweet for bitter and bitter for sweet.' The love of *self* predominates in his bosom, and under its influence, and independent of all example, (though this, of course, co-operating with the natural tendency, adds to its force and hastens its development,) man goes in the way of sin; nor will he ever leave this way unless God of His grace interfere to deliver him from the power of evil, and thereby open his heart to attend to the things that concern his everlasting peace.

Thus, though the death of Christ has supplied a basis on which all men may be accepted by God, and though the blessings of His redemption are, on this ground, freely offered to all without restriction, it remains a great fact, that it is through 'the operation of God' alone that any are actually brought to accept that offer and enter into a state of salvation. Whether this position leads logically, as many believe, to the doctrines of irresistible grace, of special election, and of unconditional predestination, or may be consistently held without the adoption of these doctrines, is a question on which some of the greatest and best of men have taken opposite sides.

But as to the position itself all true Christians are at one; indeed, that men thus deeply and radically depraved can be saved only through the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, that, as a lost and helpless sinner, man is redeemed to God by God, through God, so that 'all things,' in the matter of his redemption, 'are of

Necessity of regenerating grace.

God,' is of the very essence of that revelation of the Triune Jehovah, into the name of whom men are baptized when they assume the Christian profession. To relinquish this, therefore, would be a giving up of one of the peculiar and vital elements of the faith.

If this seems to bear hard on the religious character of Pelagius, it may be some relief to recollect that men are often much better than their opinions; nor is there wanting reason to believe that had it not been for the severity with which he was treated, and the extremities to which he was driven by the terrible logic of his gigantic antagonist, Augustine, he would never have fallen upon such a broadly developed system of erroneous opinions as that which he ultimately avowed. He is not the only good man whom controversy has seduced into the advocacy of opinions which existed rather as notions in his logical understanding than were realized by him as truths appertaining to his Christian consciousness.

Pelagius better than his creed.

Pelagius was greatly aided in the development and defence of his opinions by Cœlestius, a fellow-monk, and also, as is most probable, a fellow-countryman.[1] Before becoming a monk, Cœlestius had practised at Rome

Connection of Cœlestius with Pelagius.

[1] Augustine says these errors originated not with the clergy, but 'quibusdam veluti monachis,' *with certain monks of a sort.* (*De gestis Pelagii*, § 61.) Jerome calls Cœlestius 'Pelagius's mastiff,' and says he was of Scottish (that is, Irish) descent; but for the reason already assigned we cannot attach much weight to this father's testimony in this case. In the succeeding clause, he compares Cœlestius to Cerberus, proposes to split his skull with a spiritual club, and trusts that thereby he and his master, Pluto, will be consigned to

as an advocate, and to this probably may be ascribed at once the greater boldness and the greater controversial adroitness with which he advocated the doctrines of Pelagius than Pelagius himself.[1] By their united efforts they succeeded in gaining many proselytes, and disseminating the leaven of their sentiments extensively both in the East and in the West. Opposed by such antagonists as Augustine and Jerome, and condemned by council after council, they nevertheless steadfastly adhered to their positions, fearlessly and ably defended them, laboured with unwearied assiduity to propagate them, and ultimately succeeded to such an extent that when they disappeared from the arena they left them so deeply rooted in the minds of multitudes that for nearly a century afterwards the controversy agitated the Church; nor was it until the secular power interfered to suppress their opinions that victory was secured, and that only by a sort of compromise on some points, to the opposite party.

Pelagianism in Britain.

Whether Pelagius ever revisited Britain after his peculiar opinions had been promulgated is uncertain. Some of the chroniclers have asserted that he did, but the only evidence for this is furnished by an expression of Prosper of Aquitaine, who wrote against Pelagius,

eternal silence. This coarse abuse, strange to say, occurs in the preface to a Commentary on Jeremiah, lib. iii. It is evident that whatever else the learned monk may have reaped from his studies of Jeremiah, he had imbibed nothing of the meek and plaintive sadness with which that prophet deplored the progress of degeneracy among his countrymen.

[1] 'Cœlestius assertior, Pelagius occultior.' Augustine, *De Peccato Origin.*, § 13.

to the effect that this heresy had taken possession of Britain, through certain of its advocates returning to the country of their birth, (*solumque originis occupantes*,) an expression far too vague to build upon, especially in the face of the general tradition that both Pelagius and Cœlestius retired to the East and died there. The person to whom Bede[1] assigns the introducing of Pelagianism into Britain is Agricola, the son of Severianus, a Pelagian bishop, probably of Gaul. It is supposed that the severe execution of the edicts against Pelagianism in that country induced Agricola, and along with him some British ecclesiastics who had imbibed Pelagian opinions in Gaul, to flee into Britain, where it would appear greater toleration was at that time practised. Their attempts to propagate their peculiar views were attended with considerable success; so much so that the orthodox part of the British clergy, feeling themselves unprepared or incompetent to deal with their subtle antagonists, sent over to the bishops of Gaul for help.

This request was favourably entertained by the latter; and a council having been called, they despatched two of their number, Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, and Lupus, bishop of Troyes, both men of great reputation, to render aid to the orthodox cause in Britain. Some have attempted to show that this mission was the act of Celestine, the Roman bishop, who, as head of the Church, it is asserted, interposed of right to send his legates to suppress heresy in

Bishops sent to Britain from Gaul.

[1] *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. i. c. xvii.

this part of the Church. But this is mere assumption, for which there is no shadow of evidence, except a confused statement of one Prosper, of whom no one knows whether he was the Prosper who was the friend of Augustine or some other; and it is contradicted by the express testimony of Constantius, who wrote the life of Germanus, of the author of the life of Lupus, of Bede, and others, who had the very best means of ascertaining the facts of the case, and were under no possible inducement to misrepresent them in the way they have done if their statement be not true.

Germanus and Lupus, on their arrival in Britain, proceeded immediately to use their best efforts for the propagation of the truth they had come to defend. Following the apostolic and only wise plan, they presented themselves to the people, and by preaching sought to confirm those who were wavering, to enlighten those who were ignorant, and to convert those who were in error. Every day they declared the word of God, not in churches merely, but in the streets and the fields as they found opportunity. Success attended their zealous perseverance. Numbers flocked to hear them, and whilst those who had retained the Catholic faith were confirmed in it, others were won to it by the power and persuasiveness of their eloquence, so that the generality of the people embraced their opinions.

Germanus and Lupus in Britain.

Meanwhile the Pelagian leaders had kept aloof, and left the field open to the missionaries. Finding, however, that their cause was likely to perish under the assaults of the latter, they

Conference at St. Albans.

resolved to make an effort to recover their lost ground by boldly encountering their opponents in open debate. For this purpose, a conference was held at St. Albans,[1] at which a vast multitude of persons of both sexes attended to witness the impending conflict. The Pelagian clergy mustered in considerable force, arrayed in splendid apparel, and surrounded by their adherents. According to Bede, all the arrogance and all the weakness were on their side. The bishops from Gaul were humble in their attire, modest in their pretensions, and invincible in their arguments. The Pelagians spoke first, and then Germanus and Lupus replied. The victory remained with the latter, and the conference ended amidst the plaudits and the scarcely repressed violence of the multitude.[2]

Uncertainty of Bede's account of St. Albans Conference.

We must take this account with some considerable qualifications, remembering that it is the description of an interested party. We doubt if under the jealous dominion of the Romans such a conference as Bede describes, would have been allowed to assemble in Britain. It is quite certain that Bede was prepared to glorify the mission of Germanus and Lupus at almost any cost, for he proceeds forthwith to narrate such miracles as performed by them that his story must have tried the powers of even mediæval credulity, and such successes as consequent upon these that the marvel is that any pagans or heretics remained in the island at all. It is evident, also, from his own narrative that the

[1] Matthew of Westminster.
[2] *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. i. c. xvii.

success of the anti-Pelagian party could not be so great and so decisive as he represents; for hardly had Germanus and Lupus returned to Gaul, when the heresy they had come to suppress became again so prevalent that a second time aid against its advocates had to be invoked by the orthodox party in Britain.

In obedience to this second summons, Germanus returned to Britain, accompanied by Severus, a disciple of Lupus, and afterwards bishop of Trèves. This second visit is supposed to have occurred eighteen years after the former. On this occasion, the missionaries resorted to other means than those of argument and entreaty. Availing themselves probably of the edict which had been passed against the Pelagian party, they called in the aid of the secular power, and procured the banishment from the island of those who held the proscribed opinions. By these violent and utterly indefensible measures they secured their object, and Pelagianism no longer found any place in the British Church.[1]

Pelagianism suppressed by force.

Besides his exertions for the suppression of heresy, the efforts of Germanus were directed to the improvement and advantage of the British Church in other respects. To him is ascribed the establishment of schools, especially for the education of the clergy, whose deficiencies in this respect had been but too manifest in their encounters with the followers of Pelagius. He appears also to have greatly pro-

Efforts of Germanus for the improvement of the British Church.

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. i. c. xvii.–xxi.

moted the building of churches, etc. The division of the country into parishes has also been imputed to him, but erroneously, for it is certain that this was not done for some time after the conversion of the Saxons.[1] He is also said to have introduced the use of the Gallican liturgy into the British Church; but for this there is no evidence,[2] nor, indeed, for the use of a liturgy at all in the British Church at this time.

But though much fable and exaggeration is mixed up with the accounts that have come down to us of his acts in Britain, there can be no doubt that the visit of Germanus must have been attended with memorable results, from the deep impression it seems to have left on the minds of the British Christians. We see evidence of this even in our own time, in the number of churches which still retain his name in Wales; such as Llanarmon[3] in Iâl, Denbighshire; Llanarmon Dyffryn Ceiriog, in the same county; St. Harmon's, Radnorshire; Llanfechain, Mont-

Deep impression left by the visit of Germanus.

[1] See Bingham, *Christian Antiquities*, bk. ix. c. viii. § 4.

[2] Ussher, (*Brit. Eccles. Antiq.*, c. ii.,) Stillingfleet, (*Orig. Br.*, p. 216,) and Bingham, (*Christ. Ant.*, xiii. 7,) adduce an extract from a MS. in the Cotton Library (which, however, only Ussher seems to have seen) as the sole evidence they have for this assertion. It is marvellous that these learned men did not perceive that in this extract not a word is said of the introduction of the Gallican liturgy into Britain. The words of the writer are, 'Postea in Britanniis vel Scotiis *prædicaverunt*—after that, they *preached* in Britain or the country of the Scots.' Besides, what can be proved by the unsupported evidence of an anonymous MS.?

[3] The Welsh form of Germanus is *Garmon;* in composition the *G* is dropped. *Llan* signifies a pile of stones, an edifice, a church, analogous to the Gaelic *clachan*.

gomeryshire; and several chapels in Carnarvonshire and Denbighshire. Some churches also retain the memory of Lupus, in Welsh *Bleiddian*, (Wolf;) such as Llanfleiddian Fawn, in Glamorganshire; and Llanfeiddian Fach, or St. Lythian's, in the same county.[1]

In the parish of Mold, in Flintshire, is a place bearing the name of Maes-Garmon, (the field of Germanus,) which has been supposed to be the scene of a battle narrated by Bede, between the Picts and the Britons, in which the latter were led by Germanus, and obtained the victory merely by shouting Hallelujah.[2] The latter part of the story may be doubted, and yet the fact of a battle in which Germanus rendered some important service, either as a counsellor or from the courage inspired by his presence, may be perfectly true.

Legend of a Hallelujah victory.

[1] Rees, *Essay on the Welsh Saints*, quoted by Thackeray, ii. 147.

[2] *Hist. Eccl.*, i. c. xx.

CHAPTER IX.

DAWN OF CHRISTIANITY IN IRELAND AND SCOTLAND.

'They come, and onward travel without dread,
Chanting in barbarous ears a tuneful prayer—
Sung for themselves, and those whom they would free!
Rich conquest waits them:—the tempestuous sea
Of ignorance, that ran so rough and high,
And heeded not the voice of clashing swords,
These good men humble by a few bare words,
And calm with fear of God's Divinity.'

WORDSWORTH.

THAT the earliest inhabitants of Ireland, of whom we have any notice, were of Celtic race and used the Celtic speech, is admitted on all hands as ascertained; but from what quarter the earliest settlers reached that island, how many different tribes had settled upon it, and in what relation they stood to the Celtic tribes of Britain, are points on which considerable difference of opinion exists, and which, in the obscurity that overhangs that period of Irish history, there is but slender hope of determining satisfactorily.

Celts in Ireland.

Without entering upon the thorny and difficult path of antiquarian speculation in reference to this matter, it may suffice to cite the opinion of a most competent inquirer, 'that at the period of the intro-

duction of Christianity into Ireland it was occupied by the Hiberni, an ancient if not aboriginal Celtic race, by the Cruithne, as the inhabitants of Ulster are called by the native annalists, and also by the Scoti, a race who had then apparently established themselves in Ireland, and secured a complete supremacy over the elder native population, at no very distant date.

'Whencesoever the latter race was derived, we have evidence that they were considerably advanced in civilization, though their superiority appears to have been less in arts than in arms, the traces of early artistic skill being generally ascribed, on satisfactory grounds, to the older races, who acknowledged their supremacy. So effectual was their superiority in arms, however, in effacing every trace of the independence and nationality of the more ancient tribes, that towards the close of the third century at the latest, the name of Scotia appears to have been generally applied to Ireland, and for nearly seven centuries continued to indicate the Hibernia of Latin writers.'[1]

Superiority of the Scoti.

At what time, and through what channel, the Gospel first reached the people thus bearing the name of Scots,[2] we have no means of ascer-

[1] Wilson's *Archæology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*, p. 469. To the concluding statement in this passage we must demur. That the Irish were called Scoti is indisputable, but we are not so certain that Scotia was used as a 'general' designation of the country. Camden cites Isidorus as an instance, but besides this we know no other.

[2] The term *Scot*, from the Celtic *Sciute*, signifies emigrant, wanderer, and was probably applied to the race from their nomadic propensities. It is the same word which appears in

taining. We know that as early as the year 430, Christians existed in that country in sufficient numbers to attract the attention of Cœlestinus, the Roman pontiff, who in that year despatched Palladius, a deacon of the Church of Rome, on a mission to 'the Scots who believe in Christ,' in order, as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells us, 'to *confirm* their faith.'[1] In a former chapter, we have suggested the probability that during the Diocletian persecution in Britain some of the Christians, fleeing from the fury of the enemy in that country may have crossed over into Ireland with the message of the Gospel, to proclaim it among its rude inhabitants. For this we have no authority; it is mere conjecture. But the conjecture appears to us not improbable when it is recollected that the inhabitants of Ireland were of the same race with those of Britain, that they spoke substantially the same language, and that intercourse between the two islands had already taken place.

Introduction of the Gospel into Ireland.

We arrive at something like authentic history

Scythæ, the name of a notoriously nomadic race. In the Sclavonic translation of Heb. ii. 38, we have the word *ckuta* used to describe those who 'wandered in deserts.' An analogous etymon is that of *Numidæ*, from νομάδες. Camden very justly rejects the old etymology of Scoti from the Greek σκότιοι, *illegitimate*, as 'invented for the reproach of a very valiant nation by those who envied them.' *Britan.* p. 54. We suspect there are some who may be inclined to insinuate that the true etymon is also open to the charge of conveying a covert sarcasm on the wandering propensities of the modern inhabitants of North Britain.

[1] 'Ad Scotos in Christum credentes.' Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. i. c. xiii. *Anglo-Sax. Chron.* sub ann. 430.

in regard to the primitive Irish Church in connexion with the mission of Germanus to Britain, recorded in the preceding chapter. To that individual Ireland is reputed to stand indebted for the mission of her far-famed teacher, St. Patrick, for it was at his suggestion that Celestine, according to the common account, selected the latter for this purpose. Patrick is claimed by Wales, Scotland, and Armorica, as a native, and it seems impossible to determine with any certainty in which of them he was born. On the whole, we think the preponderance of evidence is in favour of Armorica.

St. Patrick.

St. Patrick himself says that he was born at Bannavem Taberniæ, and though the place cannot be exactly identified, it seems probable that he intends what is now called Boulogne-sur-mer, in Picardy.[1] His father's name was Calpornius, who was a deacon, and his grandfather's Potitus, who had been a presbyter in the Church; his own name originally was Succath. He was born about the year 387, and when sixteen years of age was taken captive by an Irish prince, probably Nial Naighillach, or Neil of the Nine Hostages,[2] who carried him to Ireland, where he became the slave of Milchu, chief of Dalaradia, a district now comprised within the county of Antrim. After serving in the most

Parentage and early adventures of St. Patrick.

[1] See Lanigan, *Eccles. Hist.*, c. iii. [Comp. *The Writings of Patrick*, edited by Dr. C. H. H. Wright (R.T.S.), p. 35, and notes. The general opinion of historians now is, that Patrick's birthplace was in Scotland, near Dunbarton.

[2] O'Flaherty's *Ogygia*, vol. ii. p. 319. If so, the captor of St. Patrick, the chief evangelizer of Ireland, was the great-grandfather of Columba, the apostle of the Highlands of Scotland.

menial capacity for six years, he obtained his freedom and returned to his own country. Here he remained for some time with Germanus, after which he is said to have repaired to the monastic college of Tours, where he pursued studies in theology for four years.[1] Thence he went to the south of Europe, but whether to Rome or not is uncertain; in these parts, he remained for several years, engaged in the pursuit of learning and in religious exercises.

His heart, however, seems to have been in Ireland, whose benighted inhabitants he felt a strong desire to convert to the faith of Christianity. His forced residence in that island had at once determined his choice of that as his sphere of labour and fitted him for occupying it. Not only did he thus become familiar with the language and habits of the people, but it was whilst there in the house of bondage that he first came under the power of personal religion. 'There,' says he, in a work undoubtedly genuine, 'the Lord opened my heart of unbelief, so that thus late I remembered my faults, and was converted with my whole heart to the Lord my God.'

St. Patrick's love for Ireland.

It is not wonderful that a country associated with such a recollection should have had peculiar interest for him, and that he should have preferred it to all others as the sphere wherein to devote himself to the service of Him who, as he touchingly adds, 'had pity on his youth and ignorance, and took care of him before he was wise, and protected him

[1] Patrick's earlier biographers say, 'under the auspices of St. Martin.' But Martin of Tours died A.D. 397, when Patrick was about ten years old.

and comforted him as a father his son.' This wish filled his thoughts by day and haunted his dreams at night. 'I dreamt,' says he, in his own account of this part of his life, 'that I saw a venerable man, apparently from Ireland, with innumerable letters in his hand, one of which he gave to me, and I read on it the inscription, *The Voice of the Irish.* At the same moment, a voice like that of the people who live by the wood of Foclut, near the western sea, seemed to fall upon my ear, invoking me to come and dwell with them. My heart was sorely touched therewith, and I could no longer read; so I arose.'

The wish so deeply cherished was at length granted. According to the monkish tradition, Patrick was, on the recommendation of Germanus, commissioned by Celestine Bishop of Rome, whose attention had recently been forcibly called to the state of religion in Ireland, to visit that country; but the accuracy of this tradition may be questioned on several grounds, the principal of which are the absence of any allusion to such a commission in his own account of himself, and the fact that the Church founded by him in Ireland followed the British Church in those points in which the latter differed from that of Rome.[1] It is uncertain, also, whether he was ordained in Britain or in Gaul to the office of bishop; according to Nennius, he was ordained along with another proselyte of the name of Segerus by certain bishops of Gaul, after which he crossed over into Britain, and thence to Ireland.

Tradition that St. Patrick was sent by Celestine to Ireland.

[1] Neander, *Church Hist.*, vol. iii. p. 164.

Here he encountered difficulties and dangers in the prosecution of his object under which the spirit of a man of less energy and devotedness would have sunk. 'He had come into a land of pagans and of pirates; but his persevering energy, his kindness, and sound sense, at length enabled him to conquer their prejudices, to conciliate and to convert them. His literary, moral, and religious labours were extended over a long course of years; and although much fable is mixed up with his history, there is enough of unequivocal truth to show that Patrick is entitled to the first place among the benefactors of Ireland.'[1] He was not, indeed, as he has been often called, the apostle of Ireland, for Christianity existed there before his arrival; but though this was the case, it is nevertheless certain that he found the greater part of the island utterly destitute of its influence —that to him a degree of success was vouchsafed such as none of his predecessors had attained—and that as respects the regulation and internal order of the Church, as well as the institution of those seats of learning by which its interests were to be promoted and its influence perpetuated, he stands paramount in his claims.

Difficulties of St. Patrick in Ireland.

The Church thus founded and ordered by Patrick continued for several generations to flourish, and to exert a most benignant influence upon the inhabitants of Ireland. Civilization rapidly advanced among them; schools were established, from which went forth many

Rise of the early Irish Church.

[1] Thackeray, vol. ii. p. 168. [Comp. Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils*, vol. ii., part ii.]

whose reputation for learning and ability spread throughout Europe; the fine arts, especially architecture, caught hold of the national genius, and were successively cultivated; and Ireland rose to an eminent place in point of refinement and intelligence among the nations of the West.

During all this time, her ecclesiastics maintained their independence of the Roman pontiff, and conducted their affairs without respect to his authority.[1] In many particulars they differed from both the theology and the ritual of the Romish Church; and when, in the seventh century, the pretensions of the Pope to supremacy over Christendom were openly avowed and zealously advocated, in no quarter were they more strenuously resisted than in Ireland. Indeed, it was by ecclesiastics of the Scottish Church, both in Ireland and Scotland, that the most determined opposition was offered, not only at home, but on the continent of Europe, to the advocates of the papal claims. This opposition unhappily did not prove successful. For wise, though to us inscrutable purposes, 'the man of sin' was permitted to erect the empire of his spiritual tyranny over Europe; and Ireland, after a noble struggle, was involved in the general catastrophe.

Opposition of Irish ecclesiastics to the Bishop of Rome.

From that hour the prosperity that had attended her early career, after the introduction of the Gospel, gradually disappeared. The gloom of ignorance and superstition settled down

Decadence of Irish Church.

[1] See this amply demonstrated by Ussher, in his *Discourse on the Religion anciently professed by the Irish and British*, 1687.

upon her people. The purity of doctrine and simplicity of faith that had marked her primitive confessors gave place to corrupt traditions and idle observances, and the blossoms which had made beautiful the spring of her regeneration went up as dust, or grew into apples of Sodom. Never did a fairer morning pass into so gloomy a day as that which for ages has rested on unhappy Ireland. Let us trust that the dawn of a new and better epoch is at hand, and that a country so richly endowed with the bounties of Providence, will no longer be left sterile, blighted, and fettered under the tyranny of Popery.

Of the Scots of Ireland a portion emigrated some time in the sixth century into Caledonia, which from them received the name it has ever since chiefly borne. They found it already occupied by Celtic tribes, of which there seem to have been two great divisions, the Criuthne or Northern Picts, and the Piccardach or Southern Picts.[1] In the Welsh Chronicles, these are distinguished as the Gwyddyl duon and the Gwyddyl

Celts in Scotland.

[1] For long it was believed that the name *Pict* was derived from the Latin *pictus*, 'painted,' and was applied to the Caledonian Gaels because they painted their bodies. This opinion has long been exploded among antiquaries. It is not certain, however, whether we should derive the word from the Welsh *peith*, to scream, to fight, whence *picta*, a fighting man, or from a root signifying *separated*, and which appears very extensively in the names of places and people where the Celts had settlements, such as Pict-ones in Gaul, Pictavia, Piccardy, and (with the *p* aspirated) *Vectis*, the Isle of Wight. In Welsh, *uight* means an island or place severed from the main land. See Whittaker's *History of Manchester*, pp. 415–417.

gwyn—the dark and the fair Gaels.[1] Some have ascribed to the Picts a Gothic or Scandinavian origin; but there can be little doubt that they were Celts, and of the same race with those inhabiting South Britain.[2] Probably they were the descendants of the earliest Celtic occupants of Britain, who have gradually receded northwards as fresh immigrants poured into the southern parts of the island—a supposition which is favoured by the fact that the name retained by the Scottish Gaels as their proper designation is Albanich, from which the oldest name of Britain, Albion, is derived.

Introduction of the Gospel into Scotland.

Among these northern Celts, the Gospel was probably introduced, as we have above suggested, from the south. At the period to which our narrative has reached, we find among them traces of the existence and progress of Christianity, faint and few indeed, and discernible amidst the gloom and confusion that then reigned there, only as streaks of the blue firmament are sometimes discoverable through the rack of clouds on a dark and stormy day, yet sufficiently distinct to convey to us the assurance that amidst

[1] It has been conjectured that it is to these two divisions that Ammianus Marcellinus refers when he says, 'At that time [A.D. 368] the Picts were divided into two nations, the Di-Caledonii and the Vecturiones.' Lib. xxvii. c. viii. Camden was at one time of the opinion that the *Di* in the former word was the Celtic *Dee* or *Du*, 'black,' but this opinion he afterwards renounced. The *Vect* in Vecturiones plainly points to *Pict*, and Camden's first opinion was perhaps not far from the truth.

[2] Of the Pictish words which remain, nearly the whole are closely allied to the moderate Welsh. See Latham's *Treatise on the English Language.*

the war of elements God had already graciously set His bow in the clouds, and given presage of a settling of the storm. No records, however, remain affording us any clue to the particular instrumentality by which the light of Divine truth was conveyed at first into these regions.

The monkish historians have done their endeavour to dissipate this uncertainty by their legends. Thus they tell us of a king Donald, who, in the beginning of the third century of the Christian era, sent an embassy to Rome to implore Victor I., who was then pope, to send proper persons to teach and baptize him and his subjects; in consequence of which two teachers, Mark and Denys, were despatched to Scotland, by whose efforts Christianity was introduced.[1] But this, which is evidently a copy of the southern legend concerning king Lucius, is so plainly a later fiction, that we need not spend a word on the refutation of it.[2] We may only mention that like its prototype, it tramples upon chronology, for it makes Victor, who died A.D. 196, bishop of Rome in the beginning of the third century.

Monkish legends as to the founder of the Scottish Church.

One of the most famous legends connected with early Scottish ecclesiastical history is that of St. Regulus, or Rule, and his monks. As the story runs,

[1] Fordun, Boece, Buchanan, etc.

[2] Calderwood pithily remarks on this story: 'I take it to be a meere fable invented by the monkes, in time of blindnesse, to amplifie the pope's apostolic power, or to imitate the Brittish writters, who had fained the like before of Lucius, king of the Britons.' *Historie, Preamble*, vol. i. p. 34. Woodrow Soc. edit. See also Spottiswoode's *History of the Church of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 2, edit. by Russell.

Regulus was a Greek monk, living at Patras, in Achaia, where he was admonished in a dream to take with him the relics of St. Andrew, consisting of an arm-bone, three fingers of the right hand, a tooth, and three toes, which were then kept at Patras, and set out to a distant land, situated in the remotest corner of the West. Troubled with the strangeness of the vision, and afraid of the dangers of such an enterprise, Regulus hesitated to obey; but the vision having been repeated in a still more awful manner, he at length summoned up courage, and did as he had been enjoined. The relics were inclosed carefully in a box constructed for the purpose, and, accompanied by sixteen other monks and certain 'devoted virgins,' Regulus committed himself to the treacherous deep.

Legend of St. Regulus.

For two long years had he and his company to endure the perilous buffetings of the ocean, as they slowly and timidly coasted along the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, through the Straits of Gibraltar, and along the shores of Spain, France, and England. At length a storm, still more fierce than any they had previously encountered, carried them into the bay of St. Andrew's, where their vessel was dashed in pieces upon the rocks of that dangerous coast, and they themselves escaped with difficulty, bearing with them the precious box of relics as the sole remnant they had been able to preserve of their property.

Hardly had they had time to congratulate themselves on their deliverance from the perils of the ocean, when new dangers presented themselves on shore. The promontory on which they had landed was covered with

St. Regulus and his followers received by king Hergust.

forest, which afforded shelter to numerous wild beasts, especially boars of great size and fierceness, from which it derived its name of Muckross, from *muck*, a boar, and *ross*, a promontory. Nor were the human inhabitants of the vicinity much less to be dreaded, for they were of wild appearance and savage manners.

Happily, however, for the strangers, the sovereign of the district, whose name was Hergust, was a prince of better disposition than the mass of his subjects, and as it happened that he was in the neighbourhood at the time, he extended to them his protection. Struck with the sanctity and gravity of their manners, this prince ultimately became their disciple and embraced their doctrine. The king's conversion was followed by that of his people; the Druidical worship was renounced, and the faith and rites of Christianity established as the religion of the nation.

In token of gratitude and respect, Hergust presented the monks with a tract of land and built for them a Church. He also removed his royal residence to that locality, and changed its name into Kilrimont, which signifies the cell or Church of the king on the hill. At a later period, the name was changed to St. Andrew's, in homage to the sacred relics which were believed to be deposited there. Regulus, it is said, lived to a great age, and after signalizing his mission by many miracles and deeds of sanctity, he died in peace at St. Andrew's, and was buried in the Church there which bears his name.[1]

[1] Close by the ruins of the ancient cathedral of St. Andrew's, there stands a lofty square tower, to which are attached the

We give the above as a specimen of the stories which the monks have invented as to the origin of Christianity in Scotland. For such a legend they had probably not the shadow of a basis; and there can be little doubt that it was deliberately contrived for the purpose of propagating the belief that St. Andrew's contained the relics of the apostle of that name, and to draw to it in consequence the pilgrimages and offerings of the faithful.

Story of St. Regulus an invention.

We first reach something like historical ground in this inquiry in connection with the name of St. Ninian, or, according to the popular corruption, St. Ringan; though here also it is not easy to extract the truth from the mass of superincumbent and circumjacent fable. That such a person existed we have the express testimony of Bede and the Saxon Chronicle;[1] and this is corroborated by popular tradition, for his name is spread over Scotland, and lives in numerous localities where churches, chapels, wells, caves, and other noticeable objects have been dedicated to him. There is a life of him written by Ailred, abbot of Rievaulx, in Yorkshire, but it is a production of the twelfth century, and is full of such manifest falsehoods that no use can be made of it with the slightest confidence that any of its details rest on the basis of even traditionary

St. Ninian or Ringan.

ruins of a small chapel. This still bears the name of St. Regulus's Chapel. It is undoubtedly of great antiquity; but the best judges pronounce it a work of the twelfth century. See Wilson's *Archæology*, p. 613. A small oratory, hewn out in the solid rock of the cliffs overhanging St. Andrew's Bay, bears the name of St. Regulus's Cave.

[1] *Hist. Eccl.*, lib. iii. c. iv. *Sax. Chron.*, sub ann. 565.

evidence.[1] The slight statement of Bede concerning him is almost all we have to trust to, and even of it some parts may be questioned.

Birth, education and residence of St. Ninian.

Whether Ninian was born north or south of the Tweed is uncertain. Bede says simply that he was 'of the British nation'; while Ailred, following the northern tradition, makes him the son of a prince who reigned over the district known in modern times as Galloway. It seems pretty certain that he received his education in the monastery of St. Martin, at Tours, in France, and it is even stated that St. Martin was his uncle. Returning into Britain, he took up his residence among the southern Picts, and began to preach to them the Gospel and introduce them to the knowledge of letters. His principal residence was in Galloway, where he built a church of stone, which at that time was so great a novelty that it rendered the place famous, and procured for it the name of Whitherne or Whitehouse, (*Candida Casa*,) a name which still survives in Whithorn. This latterly became the see of a bishop, the occupants of whom were styled *Episcopi Candidæ Casæ*. It is not improbable that Ninian also erected a monastery here, as this was the usual form which educational institutions assumed in his age.

Work of St. Ninian.

From Galloway, Ninian extended his efforts in different directions among the Southern Picts. His labours appear to have been abundant and persevering, but to what extent they were crowned with success it is impossible to say.

[1] It is published in Pinkerton's *Vitæ Antiquæ Sanctorum qui habitaverunt in Scotia, etc.* London, 1789. 8vo.

Ailred says that he planted churches, ordained presbyters, consecrated bishops, and divided the country into parishes; but this is no more to be unqualifiedly received than the stories of the numerous miracles he is said to have performed are to be received at all. That he was the instrument in the hand of God of converting many to the faith of the Gospel—that by his means several were trained and sent forth as preachers of Christianity—and that some of these were ordained by him over settled congregations, may be admitted, for less than this would hardly justify the veneration in which his name was held. But more than this we cannot concede to mediæval testimony.

Death and legends of St. Ninian.

Ninian is reported to have reached the age of seventy-two, and to have died on the sixteenth day of September, A.D. 432. His remains were interred at Whithorn. He left behind him a reputation for learning and sanctity, which caused his name to be widely venerated, and brought multitudes of all ranks to pay their devotions at his tomb.[1] He is also reputed to have been the author of a work on the Psalms and a collection of sayings of the saints, written, says Ussher, 'in an unaffected, but useful style.' In the country surrounding Whithorn his name still sur-

[1] Even royal personages undertook this pilgrimage. In 1474, the Queen of James III. visited the tomb of St. Ninian; and there is a curious entry in the books of the Treasurer of Scotland relating to this, charging payment made for 'livery gowns to four ladies of the queen's chamber, at her passing to Quhytehorne, 21 ells of gray fra David Gill, price £10 10*s*. Scots.' In 1507, James IV. made the same pilgrimage on foot to pray for the recovery of his queen.

vives in popular legends, which have been handed down from father to son for many generations, and which ascribe to him deeds, in number and marvellousness, enough to have made the reputation of a dozen saints. Despite of the injury, however, which this accumulation of fable is calculated to do to his memory, his name will survive invested with respect as the earliest really connected with the evangelism of Scotland that has emerged from the mists of antiquity.

Whilst Ninian laboured amongst the Piccardach, or southern Picts, it is said that Palladius, having

Palladius.

either failed in his mission to Ireland or deeming it accomplished, passed over into Caledonia, and laboured among the Criuthne, or Northern Picts, many of whom he converted to Christianity. His residence is stated to have been at Fordon in the Mearns, where, after many years of faithful and successful labour, he died, and was interred in a church which he had built there.[1] It is worthy of notice that for many ages there was a church in that parish which went by the name of 'Paddy's Kirk,' and that there is still a well which is called 'Paddy's Well,' as is supposed from a popular corruption of the word Palladius.[2]

Spottiswoode narrates that 'in the year 1494, William Shevez, archbishop of St. Andrew's, visiting that church, did in reverence of his memory

[1] Ussher, c. xv. p. 671, etc. Major, *De Gestis Scotorum*, lib. ii. c. ii. Buchanani *Hist. Rer. Scot.*, lib. v. c. xvi. Nennii *Hist. Brit.*

[2] Spottiswoode's *Hist. of the Church of Scotland*, bk. i. sub init.—*Statistical Account—Parish of Fordon.*

gather his bones and bestow them in a silver shrine; which, as report goeth, was taken up at the demolishing of the churches, by a gentleman of good rank who dwelt near unto that place. The people of the country, observing the decay which followed in that family not many years after, ascribed the same to the violation of Palladius's grave.[1] It is probable that the disposition which led this 'gentleman of good rank' to act the mean and guilty part of a plunderer was associated with habits which had more to do with the ruin of his family than any imagined retribution for his having violated the grave of a saint.

With Palladius, tradition associates Tervanus, as his fellow-labourer and successor among the Picts.[2] Another name, which has been imprinted on many Scottish localities, is that of Servanus, or St. Serf, who is also said to have been a companion or disciple of Palladius, and to have been sent by him on a mission to the Orkney Islands.[3] The persevering labours of St. Kentigern deserve also to be recorded as among historical facts belonging to the early history of the Church of Scotland, though of later date than those just mentioned.

Tervanus, Servanus and Kentigern.

Imperfect as is our acquaintance with the details of the early progress of the Gospel among the rude and barbarous inhabitants of Caledonia, it is nevertheless satisfactory to know that it was introduced into that country at a comparatively early period, and that

Results of the introduction of Christianity into Scotland.

[1] Spottiswoode, *ubi supra.* [2] Major, Spottiswoode, etc
[3] Ussher, *loc. cit.*

there, as elsewhere, the word of God proved itself a fire and a hammer to break the rock in pieces. To use the words of a distinguished writer, 'even over these wild people, inhabiting a country as savage as themselves, the Sun of righteousness arose with healing under His wings. Good men, on whom the name of saint (while not used in a superstitious sense) was justly bestowed, to whom life and the pleasures of this world were as nothing, so they could call souls to Christianity, undertook and succeeded in the perilous task of enlightening these savages.

'Religion, though it did not at first change the manners of nations waxed old in barbarism, failed not to introduce those institutions on which rest the dignity and happiness of social life. The law of marriage was established amongst them, and all the brutalizing evils of polygamy gave place to the consequences of a union which tends most directly to separate the human from the brute species. The abolition of idolatrous ceremonies took away many bloody and brutalizing practices; and the Gospel, like the grain of mustard seed, grew and flourished in noiseless increase, insinuating into men's hearts the blessings inseparable from its influence.'[1]

[1] Scott's *History of Scotland*, vol. i. p. 9.

CHAPTER X.

THE PRIMITIVE BRITISH CHURCH IN ITS DECLINE.

'Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates and men decay.'

GOLDSMITH.

In the beginning of the fifth century, the ancient British Church may be regarded as having reached its highest climax. In extent, in influence, and in external order, it had at that time attained a point which it never surpassed, and from which it rapidly sank. Before narrating the circumstances which led to, and those which marked its decline, we may cast a rapid glance at its condition during this its most flourishing state.

Climax of the Church in Britain.

To what extent Britain had become Christian it is not possible for us accurately to determine. Whilst the extravagant descriptions of Nennius and others must be discarded on the one hand, we must, on the other, guard against the opposite extreme of concluding that Christianity had taken but a very partial hold upon the minds of the people. It is absurd to believe that there were at this time twenty-eight episcopal sees

Extent of the Church in Britain.

in the island, under the superintendence of three archbishops, those of York, London, and Caerleon.[1] But it is not at all improbable that a much larger number than this of pastors presided over churches in different parts of Britain, and that the three cities named may have been the seats of bishops under whose superintendence the entire Church was placed.

Poverty of the early British Church.

Britain was at this time in a much wealthier state than it had ever been before, or than it reached for many ages after the Saxon invasion. But there is no evidence to prove that any large portion of this wealth flowed into the coffers of the Church. No ruins of churches attest the existence of splendid edifices for the worship of the true God, as the remains of tesselated pavements and other architectural ornaments afford evidence of the sumptuous buildings erected by the Romans and the Romanized Britons for their own occupancy; nor have any relics been discovered which would indicate that costly furniture was provided for the celebration of any of the Christian rites.

The revenues of the clergy were derived from the voluntary contributions of their flocks, and seem to have been extremely scanty. Gibbon states that the average income of bishops in the Roman empire, after the emperors became Christian, may be estimated at sixteen pounds of gold, equivalent to somewhere about £600 sterling; but it may be doubted if any of the British bishops approached within

[1] Gildas, *Ep. de Brit. excidio.*

many degrees of this medium; they are more likely to have stood at the minimum, which Gibbon says was two pounds of gold, or £80 sterling.[1] At this Council of Ariminum, held A.D. 359, the only bishops who were poor enough to find it necessary to accept the Emperor's offer to support them during the sitting of the council were three from Britain, whose conduct in this matter gave much offence to their brethren, who thought that they ought rather to have sought aid from private liberality than accepted the bounty of the emperor.[2]

Orthodoxy of the British Church.

We have already seen that, with the exception of a slight taint of Arianism and a deeper infection of Pelagianism, both of which were ultimately eradicated, the doctrines taught in the British Church were those of the ancient orthodoxy. Their worship, so far as anything certain is known of it, appears to have been simple, and much less affected by unscriptural innovations than that of many other parts of the Church after the third century. Already, however, may traces of a vain superstition be detected, if not in the pilgrimages of British Christians to the sacred places in Palestine,[3] (which might be merely the result of a natural, and, in some respects, laudable curiosity,) certainly in their flocking to gaze on such a miserable fanatic as Simon Stylites, who thought he could best prepare himself for heaven by standing for years on the top of a pillar.[4]

[1] *Decline and Fall*, ch. xx. vol. iii. p. 286, Milman's edit.
[2] Sulp. Severus, *Sacr. Hist.*, lib. ii. c. lx.
[3] Jerome, *Ep.* xvii. or lxvi.
[4] Theodoret, *Hist. Religios.*, c. xxvi.:—'Many come [to gaze

That the British Church sustained intimate relations with other churches, especially those on the continent of Europe, is abundantly evident. But it is no less so that from first to last it occupied the position of a free and independent church subject to no foreign control, and acknowledging no supremacy in any party beyond its own pale. The attempts which have been made to show that the supremacy of the Roman bishop was recognised by this Church are utterly futile. No instances can be adduced in which any such authority was either submitted to by the British ecclesiastics, or even pretended to by the bishops of Rome; whilst the differences that existed in regard to certain usages—such as the form of the tonsure, and the time of observing Easter—between the British Church and the Church of Rome, and the tenacity with which, at a later period, the members of the former clung to them in opposition to the latter, indicate strongly both the original mutual independence of the two Churches, and the sense of obligation felt by the weaker of the two to maintain its independence against all the encroachments of the stronger.

Relations of the British Church with Rome.

It is not till we come down to the mission of Augustine, in the end of the sixth century, that we find the bishop of Rome comprehending Britain within the pale of his jurisdiction; and even then, the language he uses in reference to the remains of the ancient British Church, which

The mission of Augustine.

on him] of those who inhabit the extreme west, Spaniards and Britons and Gauls, who lie between the two.'

still existed in Wales, shows that he fully understood the position of independence on which he claimed to stand. If he had been ignorant of this, the conduct of the British bishops would speedily have enlightened him.

When Augustine asked them to forsake their ancient, and, as he viewed them, schismatical customs, they bluntly and decidedly refused, telling him that they would do none of the things he proposed, nor receive him as their archbishop.[1] Augustine tried all means to overcome their obstinacy; he flattered, he besought, he threatened, he even, as Bede assures us, though much against his will, and only under the constraint of necessity,[2] performed a miracle for their conviction; but it was all in vain. The British clergy held to their ancient faith and to the heritage of independence which their fathers had bequeathed them; and it was not till the sword of civil power was unsheathed against them, and a massacre of twelve hundred of them and their adherents, followed by the demolition of their monastic institute at Bangor, had thinned their ranks, that they bowed to the claims of the Saxon prelate, and submitted in silence, if not with acquiescence, to the usurped supremacy of Rome![3]

Resistance of the British bishops to Augustine.

[1] Bede, *Hist. Eccl.*, ii. 2.

[2] Necessitate compulsus, *ibid.*

[3] Bede, *l. c.* comp. Ussher, *Religion of the Ancient Irish*, c. x. Ussher quotes some striking verses of the famous Welsh bard Taliessyn, of which he gives the following version:—

> 'Woe be to the priest, y-born,
> That will not cleanly weed his corn

We now turn to narrate briefly the circumstances connected with the decay of the ancient British Church. The symptoms of this begin to appear at the period when the Romans finally retired from Britain. They left behind them a people rendered timid by subjection, and enfeebled by luxury and indolence, and, at the same time, presenting by their possessions a tempting inducement to the wild and hungry barbarians who had long impatiently watched them from behind the wall of Antoninus. It needed but the withdrawal of the dreaded legions by whom that wall was guarded and the other Roman stations in Britain occupied, to remove every impediment to the onset of their fierce neighbours.

Decay of the British Church.

Scarcely had the legions begun to march when the Scots and Picts showed themselves in the North of England; and when at length the whole Roman force had retreated, they poured themselves in countless swarms upon the devoted inhabitants of the South. Panic-stricken, and unskilled in the arts of war, the latter everywhere gave way to their impetuous assailants. Villages were burned, towns sacked, fields stripped of their produce, and thousands of both sexes slain. The discomfited and terrified Britons fled to

Invasion of the Scots and Picts.

> And preach his charge among;
> Woe be to that shepherd, I say,
> That will not watch his foes alway,
> As to his office doth belong;
> Woe be to him that doth not keep
> From Romish wolves his sheep,
> With staff and weapon strong.'

Taliessyn lived in the sixth or seventh century.

mountain fastnesses, or hid themselves amid the recesses of the forests that still covered many parts of their country. When the invaders had turned the cultivated part of the country into a desert, they returned to their own part of the island, hastily retreating before the avenging fury of a pestilence which the effluvia of decaying corpses left unburied by the victors had chiefly occasioned.

When the Scots and Picts had retired, the Britons came out of their retreats and resumed occupancy of their former abodes. A season of unusual prosperity ensued, and they were beginning to raise their heads from the deep depression into which the injuries they had sustained had plunged them, when their peace was again disturbed by the incursions of their restless assailants. Adversity, however, had taught them courage as well as wisdom. They had learned that cowardice in a nation is not the way to avert calamity, and that if men will not 'quit themselves like men' in defence of their rights they are only too likely to suffer as brutes. On the renewed attacks of their enemies, therefore, they manfully stood to their arms, and on several occasions proved that the prowess which centuries before had staggered even the veteran legions of Rome had not wholly deserted their race.

An interval of prosperity for Britain.

Neither in numbers, however, nor in physical strength, nor in warlike impetuosity, were they equal to their assailants, and when, after several years of continued struggles and fluctuating success, they learned that the Scots and Picts were mustering their resources from all

Invitation to the Saxons.

quarters for an overwhelming assault, they again lost spirit, and in an evil hour for themselves invited the only too ready Saxons to come over to their aid.

Fable of Stesichorus related by Aristotle.

Aristotle tells us that when the inhabitants of Himera[1] were about to select the tyrant Phalaris as their general, and to intrust to him the guardianship of their liberty, Stesichorus warned them against such folly by narrating a fable. 'A horse,' said he, 'had been deprived of the sole occupancy of a meadow by the intrusion of a stag, and, wishing to be revenged on the intruder, he asked help of man. "Submit," said the latter, "to receive the bit, and take me on thy back, and I will avenge thee of thine adversary." It was done as proposed, but instead of punishing the stag, man subjugated the horse, and kept him thenceforward as his slave. So do ye also take heed lest desiring to punish your enemies you follow measures which will cause you to fall into the same snare as the horse.'[2] This fable has been often repeated since; but never was the force of it more strikingly illustrated than in the case of the invitation given by the Britons to the Saxons to come over and aid them against the Scots and Picts. The inroads of the latter were, indeed, thereby repressed, but the ally speedily assumed the position of the invader, and remained to appropriate to himself what he had been invited to preserve to the rightful owners.

It was not without many a fierce struggle that

[1] Now Salso, in Sicily.
[2] Aristot., *Rhet.*, ii. c. 2.

the British yielded up to the Saxon those fair domains of which they had been for so many ages the occupants, and of which imperial Rome had ultimately abandoned to them the free proprietorship. Under the pressure of necessity, the warlike spirit of the British revived, and deeds were done by them which furnished material for the poet and the romancer in ages long subsequent.

Saxon inroads in Britain.

Under the leadership of Ambrosius, Uthyr Pendragon, his far-famed son Arthur, Urien, and others, whose names have been so enveloped in the dazzling emblazonry of fiction that it has been almost doubted whether such persons ever existed at all, the British protracted the struggle against their powerful and crafty enemies for upwards of a century.[1] But their

[1] Prince Arthur is the hero round whom the romancers of the middle ages have especially delighted to entwine their wild and fantastic wreath of fable. It is surprising how far his fame spread, and at how early a period he became a favourite subject with both bards and monkish chroniclers. Geoffrey of Monmouth has related his adventures at length in his *British Chronicle*, which was compiled in the early part of the twelfth century, and the materials of which were collected chiefly among the descendants of the fugitives from Britain who had settled in Armorica. But Arthur is mentioned by both Gildas and Nennius, and there can be no doubt that long before the time of Geoffrey he had been celebrated in many a traditionary story and bardic song, not only among the race whose fading glories he had for a season retrieved, but among peoples to whom they and their language were alike strange. In the Norman romances, Arthur is a central figure, and he, his chivalrous galaxy of knights, and their brilliant exploits, were for many generations the standing favourites of all classes of the people, wherever romance and minstrelsy were known in western Europe. A singular fascination seems to attach itself to his name and story, which had well nigh drawn even Milton to make him the subject of

prowess was in vain. New troops continued to pour into the country from Germany; the most unscrupulous measures were resorted to by the invaders to thin the ranks of the natives; multitudes of the latter fell in battle, multitudes were slaughtered after they had been entrapped into the power of the enemy; famine and suffering compelled many to yield themselves as slaves to the conqueror; and numbers fled to the kindred tribes of Armorica. Retreating before the merciless invader, the language which a modern poet[1] has put into the mouth of the North American Indians might have with equal propriety been attributed to them:—

> 'They waste us!—ay, like April snow
> In the warm breeze, we shrink away;
> And fast they follow as we go
> Towards the setting day—
> Till they shall fill the land, and we
> Are driven into the western sea.

Wales a refuge for the Britons.

Between the British, however, and the sea were interposed the mountains of Wales, in the fastnesses of which the peeled and scattered remnant found a refuge which they were able to defend against their assailants. There they accordingly established themselves, and there their descendants have continued to the present day, breathing the spirit of liberty and preserving the

an epic, and to which Spenser yielded the full submission of his genius. King Arthur furnished the theme of a splendid poem from the pen of Sir E. Bulwer Lytton. [The *Idylls of the King*, by Lord Tennyson, have clothed the legends with fresh beauty, and have given them currency wherever the English language is known.]

[1] Bryant.

race and language of the ancient Britons in a purity which has been little affected either by the arts or the arms of the powerful nations which have successively occupied the soil from which they were driven.[1]

During this long period of confusion and disaster, the British Church suffered severely. It suffered as well from the incursions of the Scots and Picts as from the progressive conquest of the country by the Saxons. By neither

Sufferings of the British Church.

[1] In the remains of the Welsh bards are many striking passages relating to this period of their national history. The following may be adduced as specimens:—Taliessyn thus describes one of the battles fought by Urien: 'When the shouts of the Britons ascended louder than the roaring of the waves upon the storm-tossed shore, neither field nor forest afforded safety to the foe. I saw the warriors in their brave array; I saw them after the morning's strife—oh! how altered! I saw the conflict between the perishing hosts—the blood that gushed forth and soaked into the red ground. The valley that was defended by a rampart was no longer green. Wan, weary men, pale with affright, and stained with blood, dropped their arms and staggered across the ford. I saw Urien with his red brow; his sword fell on the bucklers of his enemies with deadly force; he rushed on them like an eagle enraged.' The following, in a different strain, deplores the fall of Urien; it is from the songs of Llywarch:—'I bear a head from the mountains; the body will, ere night, be buried under the cairn of stones and earth. Where is he that supported and feasted me? Euryddiel will be joyless to-night. Whom shall I praise now Urien is no more? The hall is stricken into ruins; desolate the floor where many a hound and hawk were trained for the chase. Nettles and weeds will grow over that hearth which, when Urien lived, was ever open to the tread of the needy; the shout of the warrior shall be heard in it no more; the decaying green will cover it; the mouldering lichen will conceal it; the thorn will above it grow; the caldron will become rusted that seethed the deer; the sword of the warrior will no longer clank over it; no sound of harmony will be heard there; where once the blazing torches flashed, the swine will root, and the ants will swarm, for Urien is no more.'

party were the Christians likely to be respected. By the former, who were still votaries of Druidism, they would be hated as apostates from that faith; and by the fierce worshippers of Odin and Thor they would be despised as the followers of a religion which made no merit of prowess in battle, and held bloodshed in abhorrence. By both, their churches were plundered and burned, their ministers cruelly slaughtered, their schools and monasteries subverted, and their congregations dispersed. They suffered, likewise, from the jealousy of the unconverted part of their own countrymen, and it would appear also from dissension among themselves.

Notwithstanding all, however, the British Church never became extinct. On the contrary, even in the most troubled period of the Saxon conflict, it not only continued to exist, but was signalized by the appearance amongst its members of men whose names have come down to the present day, and whose services have been embalmed in the traditions and poetry of their nation.

Distinguished Churchmen during times of Saxon oppression.

Among these were Dubricius, bishop of Llandaff; David, (or Dewi,) bishop of Menevia, since called from him St. David's; Teilo, the successor of Dubricius at Llandaff, and of David as primate of Wales; Iltyd, or Iltutus, whose school at Caerworgorn[1] was for many generations considered the great centre of ecclesiastical learning in Britain; Asaph,

[1] Now Llaniltyd Fawr in Glamorganshire, five miles from Cowbridge. This is not the only place in Wales in which the name of Iltyd is preserved. [On the above names, see Pryce's *Ancient British Church*.]

who presided over the diocese which has ever since borne his name; and many others who appear to have been men of zeal, piety, and learning, and to whose exertions the remnant of the British who settled in Wales were indebted for the preservation of the lights of religion and learning among them. To this period also belongs, in all probability, the most ancient of our historians, Gildas, though much obscurity hangs over his history.

Whilst Wales thus retained the blessings of Christianity, the rest of England was overspread once more with the darkness of a cruel and polluting idolatry. It has been made matter of reproach to the British Christians that they put forth no efforts to convert the heathens who had settled in their vicinity. For this charge, so far as respects the matter of fact, there seems but too much ground. But before we greatly blame them for this, due consideration must be given to the peculiar and trying circumstances in which they were placed. The heathen had driven them from their ancient possessions, had visited them with the heaviest calamities, had persecuted their religion, and had put to death many of its teachers and professors. They probably thought that the attempt to preach their religion to such enemies would be fruitless, if it did not expose them to new indignities and trials; and even if smarting under the sufferings they had endured, they wilfully withheld the Gospel when they might have communicated it, their conduct, though utterly inexcusable on Christian principles, will not, perhaps, surprise us when we remember how liable even the

Darkness overspreading England.

best of men are to give way to the frailties, the prejudices, and the passions of our fallen nature, so as utterly to forget the generous emotions which Christianity inspires, and the lofty obligations which it imposes.

Missionaries from Scotland.

If the British Church in Wales, however, neglected its duty to the heathen Saxons, the same charge cannot be brought against that part of it which had been established in Scotland. From the monasteries of the Culdees, missionaries went forth with the glad tidings of the Gospel into the North of England, by whom many were converted to the faith. This, however, was not until after Christianity had been introduced among the Saxons of Kent by Augustine. To the latter belongs the honour of being the first to elevate the standard of the cross among the heathen conquerors of Britain; though the chain of papal subjection which he brought along with him, and which led to Saxon England becoming a chief agent in the furtherance and establishment of papal domination in Europe,[1] must ever constrain emotions of regret and blame to mingle with the more grateful feelings with which his mission is contemplated.

Summary of history as known.

At this point our undertaking terminates. We have accomplished our proposed task of narrating the rise and fortunes of the ancient Church of Britain so far as any records remain to enable us to do so. If some of the results at which we have arrived be wholly negative—if all

[1] See Ranke's *Hist. of the Popes*, vol. i. p. 11, Foster's translation.

that we have learned in regard to certain points of interest be that we are entirely destitute of any trustworthy information respecting them, let us remember that it is something even to have learned this much; for a scientific ignorance is surely better than either a vague uncertainty or a fictitious and fancied knowledge.

On more than one important point, however, the light of history has been seen to rest. We have ascertained that at an early period, perhaps even within the apostolic age, Christianity was brought to our shores. We have seen that a Church existed in these islands long before Gregory pitied the Anglo-Saxon slaves whom he saw in Rome, or despatched Augustine to carry Christianity, in the corrupted form in which it existed in Rome in the end of the ninth century, to the people to which they belonged. We have seen the early converts to Christianity in these lands enduring persecution and martyrdom for their attachment to the faith—we have seen them at a later period resisting successfully the inroads of heresy—we have seen them throughout asserting their independence as Churchmen of all foreign control, and especially of papal supremacy.

It behoves us to contemplate these things with gratitude to the Divine Head of the Church, who secured such signal blessings to the inhabitants of this distant island of the sea; nor will it be unseasonable that we should be admonished, amid the greater intelligence, security, and activity of our age, to take heed that we do not fall short of the pious fidelity or the manly independence of the first

Christians of Britain, but rather that in proportion to our greater advantages we excel them in all that stands connected with the purity, the liberty, the spirituality, and the extension of Christ's Church.

In the closing part of our narrative we have seen the Cymry and the Saxon in fierce conflict contending for the soil of Britain. For long centuries mutual jealousy, hatred, and strife, continued to keep these races in a state of antagonism to each other, even after they were nominally united under the same sceptre. In the good providence of God these dissensions have long since terminated in our own day under the sway of our gracious sovereign, who unites in her own person both Saxon and Celtic blood. Gael, Cymry, and Teuton, in these realms are happily linked in the bonds of a common loyalty, and the enjoyment of a common liberty.

Union of contending races.

'Mild, like all strength, sits crownèd Liberty,
Wearing the aspect of a youthful queen;
And far outstretched along the unmeasured sea
Rests the vast shadow of her throne. Serene,
From the dumb icebergs to the fiery zone,
Rests the vast shadow of that guardian throne.

'And round her group the Cymrian's changeless race
Blent with the Saxon, brotherlike; and both,
Saxon and Cymrian, from that sovereign trace
Their hero-line; sweet flower of age-long growth,
The single blossom on the twofold stem;—
Arthur's white plume crests Cerdic's diadem.'[1]

[1] Lytton's *King Arthur*, book vii.

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